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Ce document constitue la deuxième partie d'un projet réalisé au Collège Vanier ayant pour but l'étude du programme d'anglais, langue maternelle, au collégial. A partir des données de la première partie du rapport concernant le contexte de l'enseignement de l'anglais langue maternelle au collégial, on élargit l'analyse au contexte de l'enseignement du français et de l'anglais, langues maternelles, aux niveaux secondaire, collégial et universitaire. Cette analyse, effectuée à travers la consultation de documents et de différents intervenants (professeurs, étudiants, employeurs, consultants, etc.), a mené à une série de recommandations concernant l'enseignement de l'anglais, langue maternelle.

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Renewing CEGEP English Curriculum, Vol. II

Anne Blott and Brian Campbell

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On peut obtenir des exemplaires supplémentaires de ce rapport de recherche aupres de la Direction des services pédagogiques du
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Chapter I. Preamble: On Renewing CEGEP English Curriculum

Overview and Objectives

The original co-research team of Arnold Keller and Anne Blott has changed since June of 1990, as Arnold Keller has left Quebec to take a position with the Department of English at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. Anne Blott has taken over responsibility for the research project this year, assisted by a new colleague, Brian Campbell of Vanier College.

The original aims of the research have been maintained: to provide a context for the study of CEGEP English curriculum and its renewal. The same two assumptions apply:

1) That curriculum is primarily the business of faculty, although other interests have legitimate roles to play;

2) That self-examination must be ongoing if curriculum is to respond to the needs of students.

The vitality of a curriculum depends on teacher commitment, for teachers must believe in the importance and value of their work if they are to teach with conviction. For that reason, we must recognize their strengths and professional judgement. In this sense also, imposing change to current practice from some abstract position—whatever its merits—will fail. Further, CEGEPs are not all identical in size, clientele, and institutional goals. So to look for a narrow definition of the ideal curriculum in English and apply it whole-cloth across the system would be counter-productive.

At the same time, curricular practice needs continual renewal at all levels: the teacher, the department, and the system. A central thesis underlying this research project is that teachers in the system are isolated. We cannot expect them to examine curriculum separate from its context and without appropriate critical tools. Last year's analysis of the first twenty years of CEGEP history began to provide that context. So did interviews and discussions with faculty at each of the campuses and research into the literature of curricular design and institutional change.

Continuing the research this year, and in keeping with last year's recommendations, we have broadened that context into the wider field of French and English studies in Quebec from the level of high school through university. We have also looked carefully at some models of curriculum planning from other jurisdictions.

We have studied relevant documents and the literature of curriculum and teaching in Quebec, including the important policy documents of the Department of Education and DGEC. We have analysed carefully and discussed new policy recommendations on the teaching of English and French from the Conseil des collèges. We have also analysed and discussed their consultation document _Vers l'an 2000,_ both of which will influence the colleges and the teaching of _langue maternelle_ in both languages. At every stage, we have reported our findings, either in meetings or in our written reports, to the

Provincial Committee for English, through workshops with the English departments and curriculum sub-groups, and through our newsletter Context to each CEGEP English teacher. But beyond establishing a context or information base, we have concentrated on working with all faculty to help develop the critical tools for curricular analysis, based on their own professional experience and insights. We have made every effort to get out to meet people interested in curriculum and teaching and to exchange ideas with them. Part of our mandate this year has also been to promote awareness of what our colleagues in the French CEGEPs are doing in langue maternelle, and to find out what challenges we both share and how we are meeting them.

We have concentrated on establishing a network of information, sharing ideas about teaching English at the high school, CEGEP, and university levels. This network extends to our students, whose perceptions on what they have learned is crucial. Again, we have spoken with their teachers in other fields to find out how English is perceived. Lastly, we have consulted with employment counsellors and future employers of our students in order to get their perspective on the students' training in English.

Research Methodology

New to the research this year are the following:

A. Techniques to develop faculty awareness and participation

1. **Key terms for curriculum discussion.** The focus here has been on identifying and elaborating some of the key terms in Quebec's educational literature for our context: formation fondamentale, integration, polyvalence in the CEGEPs, generic abilities, global versus specific objectives, summative versus formative evaluation, assessment instruments for student placement, and minimal competency or exit tests.

2. **Clarification of Objectives.** Classification of articulated objectives has followed the literature of general education and the declared practices of the CEGEP English teachers. In analyzing the results of a curriculum survey with a 51% response rate from those teachers, we have distinguished the responses coming from the individual colleges and reported both global/provincial and individual/departmental results. Reports and analyses went first to the Provincial Committee and then to department chairmen and directly to each teacher in the system. Our analyses distinguish local from global results, and this final report particularly describes the wide variations in the kinds of institutions where CEGEP English courses are taught.

The particular teaching objectives reported on are the following:

- **developing critical reading and comprehension**
- **developing effective tools of communication primarily through writing, including composition through word-processing**
- **developing effective communication tools in speaking**

- **pre-university training in the tools of research, the essay as sustained and reasoned argument, and documentation**
- **awareness of the tradition of literature written in English**
- **awareness of Canadian literature as an expression of our national culture**
- **awareness of literature as an expression of other cultures**
- **awareness of literary approaches and literary theory**
- **aesthetic pleasure and appreciation**
- **developing awareness of media as a form of expression.**

B. Techniques to build consensus

1. **Analysing and disseminating results of comparative studies of survey results, province-wide.** We have reported on three surveys: two targeting faculty and one targeting students. Results have been reported to the Provincial Committee and to each teacher through our newsletter, Context.

2. **Recognizing and articulating local issues.** In meetings with faculty in each CEGEP or College English department we have recorded feedback to specific discussion topics and identified how local conditions affect responses to the new high school English curriculum, the Conseil Avis on the teaching of English, the consultation document Vers l'an 2000, and careers-sector issues like student retention, integration of disciplines, and accreditation of communication skills.

We have provided preliminary frameworks of curricular designs through our case-studies, an intercollegiate workshop, and examination of the orientations of the French colleges.

C. Techniques to increase communications

Beginning with last year's research, it became obvious to us that the isolation of the CEGEP English teacher is a key factor. During this research we have worked on establishing an information network and have reported back, not only to the Provincial Committee, but to the individual departments and to each teacher. The three issues of our newsletter _Context_ have been our primary tool for contacting individual teachers, and we have had very positive feedback from them.

We have focussed on two case-studies this year:

- the English Language Arts curriculum in Quebec's secondary schools: its design and implementation, as well as the central question of **assessment** through summative and formative evaluation and
- the design, implementation, and objectives of the Alverno model of _formation fondamentale_ through teaching and assessing to generic abilities.

Both case-studies gave us insights on institutional change and on the need for improved communications, support, and recognition of research into curriculum.

In addition, the February publication by the Conseil des collèges of their _Avis_ on English in the CEGEPs, _l'Enseignement de l'anglais dans les collèges anglophones_, provided a new focal point for discussion in our visits with individual departments.

Further, to initiate studies and communication on the needs of the CEGEP clientele, we have distinguished three perspectives:

a. **The university**

b. **The professional or vocational CEGEP programs**

c. **The job market**.

Finally, we have produced our bibliographies from this year's work in an annotated format, both to encourage further exploration of some of the dossiers studied this year and to help future researchers in related fields.

D. Interviews, Consultations, and Workshops Again this year, we have used interviews and direct consultation as the prime techniques of interactive research. (Naturally, we had a data bank of last year's interviews to draw on as well, but do not list them again in this report. The Blott/Keller report is cited in our Bibliography.) We thank the CEGEP English department chairmen, the curriculum responsables, individual teachers, and the Provincial Committee for their time and interest in meeting us. We thank Dianne Bateman, Co-Chairman, and Selma Tischer, Vanier representative, and the Intercollegiate Development Steering Committee for their work in organizing the Alverno workshops, follow-up meetings, and the November conference. In addition, we thank the many people from other contexts who gave us interviews or feedback and ideas through consultation and workshops:

1. High schools consultants and teachers

Edda Mastropasqua, Sacred Heart
Michael Leclerc, CECM
Nancy Brown, Kahnawake Survival School,
Bob Alexander, Centennial Academy,
Bruce Harker, Selwyn House,
Joanne Trussler, Massey-Vanier High School, Cowansville
High school teachers from Chomedey-Laval, St. George's, McDonald High School

2. High School English Curriculum Consultants

Gerald G. Auchinleck Director, Academic Services, PSBGM
Michael Thomas, Director, English Studies, PSBGM
Sylvia Chesterman, English Consultant, CECM
Linda Fernandes, English Consultant, CECM
Noreen Barrett, CECM
Anna-Maria Scerbo, CECM
Gerry O'Neill, CECM
Michel Therrien, President, Association of Quebec Teachers of French (l'AQPF)
Alan Patenaude, Réseau, MEQ
Bev Steele, Evaluation, MEQ
Gayle Goodman, Curriculum, MEQ.

3. French CEGEP teachers and professionals

Colette Buguet-Melançon, Collège Edouard-Montpetit

Madeleine Bellemare, CEGEP St-Laurent

Elizabeth Roussel, CAF , CEGEP St-Laurent

Jacques Leclerc, SALF, CEGEP Bois-de-Boulogne

Lionel Jean, SALF, CEGEP Bois-de-Boulogne

4. Interviews and consultation on university demands and the preparation of English teachers:

Dr. M. Rennert, Dentistry, McGill

Consultants from the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan) (correspondence)

Remedial English teachers, Concordia University

Anthony Paré, David Dillon, Winston Emery: Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, McGill

5. Employment and personnel counsellors:

Bell Canada, the Royal Bank, the CNR.

6. Professional and Careers Education:

David Johnson, Dean of the Faculty of Applied Technologies, Vanier College.

7. DGEC: Bruce Wallace

8. Alverno College Teachers and Workshop Leaders:

"A New Look at the Discipines: Teaching Abilities Across the Curriculum"

Margaret Earley, Religious Studies

Tim Riordan, Philosophy

Lucy Cromwell, English

Leona Truchan, Biology.

Chapter II: Renewal and the CEGEP English Network

II. A. Overview

A network is a system of interconnections. For this study, **network** is our term for Quebec's system of English and French colleges, high schools and universities. It is also a term for the connections between the faculty, students, and administrators of the various colleges and between the colleges and the world of work and further study awaiting their graduates. For the student's academic progress through public school and college, and on to a vocation or to university, it is important that the levels be well articulated, with clear objectives and evaluation of achievement at each stage of the learning continuum.

In Quebec, however, especially at the college level there is more fragmentation and isolation than there is coordination. For example, schools and individual instructors have enjoyed a great deal of autonomy in the development of curriculum. Given the wide variations in the student clientele and their educational and career expectations, the colleges differ significantly in the way they define their missions and institutional goals. Again, the level and intensity of curricular discussion varies widely from one institution to the next. From our meetings, workshops, and faculty survey it seems clear that the teachers do not have much detailed information about pedagogical implications of government policies or proposals from their Academic Deans or

DSPs. The English _Cahier_ itself reflects the pluralism of the departments in offering a broad-spectrum overview of every category of course any CEGEP English teacher might teach. So there is no general agreement on common objectives and minimal competencies (or basic skills) from one college to another. From one college, the English courses in the DEC are completely transferable for university credit in Ontario. From another, four remedial courses are credited for the DEC. And there are **no simplistic ways to impose homogeneity, because the institutions themselves are so different, with different clientele and goals.**

It is not only at the college level, however, that we find little coordination. The current English Language Arts curriculum at the high school level surveys a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills, and 93% of its students pass the provincial examination. Particularly in the 60-69% range, student grades in English are unreliable, according to the MEQ 1991 analysis in _Student Writing and its Correction._ So at this point in its evolution the final high school exam does not provide the colleges with predictors of the students' future academic success or clear guidelines on their cultural literacy, reading comprehension, and writing skills. Again, at Quebec universities, there are no entrance examinations specifically focussed on English skills for the CEGEP graduate. Finally, although policies are currently changing, there have been until now no defined competencies in communication skills for accreditation in the career or professional programs. Thus, across the whole system in Quebec, the basic reading and writing abilities of the students are not systematically measured for advancement; and as a result, there is little incentive for different colleges to work together on defining common objectives even in these basic skills.

American education critics have promoted the concept of minimum competency tests to achieve the very modest aim of setting academic standards in basic skills, referenced to some abilities the students should be able to demonstrate. Bloom's description of their usefulness in establishing benchmarks presupposes good test design and integration with the objectives of the curriculum:

> The recent interest in setting academic standards in terms of minimum competency requirements for graduation is a development which may be the basis for ensuring that most students reach particular standards of learning at various grade points in the system. If such standards can be achieved at each target point, this can be one of the more effective methods of ensuring that all of the children do learn more effectively. If such minimum standards can be related to the optimal standards as well as optimal learning conditions, then most children can be brought up to the best that the public educational system can offer (501).

Several qualifiers must be noted: the establishment of target standards, the link with curriculum and learning conditions, optimal test design, for example. But we raise the subject of standards here precisely in order to cite the need for more dialogue and shared goals in the Quebec context of "the public educational system": the public high schools and CEGEPs where most citizens send their children and adolescents.

As a system, Quebec education is also fragmented into two separate ministries, with the CEGEPs falling under the Ministry of Higher Education and Science (since 1985), and the other levels of public education, the elementary and high schools, falling under the Ministry of Education. Quebec's Ministry of Education is itself only twenty years old, born of the Quiet Revolution. Burgess and Henchey summarize the system this way:

> The general structure and operation of these colleges and their programs are coordinated by three bodies at the provincial level, a department of the Ministry of Higher Education, a Council of Colleges, and a Federation of Colleges. Within the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, there is a directorate for college education (DGEC, Direction générale de l'enseignement collegial). It includes over 100 administrators, professionals, and support staff and a budget of over $6 million. Its mandate is the development of policies and regulations concerning curriculum, student life, personnel (including participation in negotiations), and resources, as well as the implementation and evaluation of programs (104).

The two languages of education in Quebec and the increasingly polyglot student population contribute to further fragmentation, as does the significant and growing proportion of education in the private sector, a far larger proportion than in any other Canadian province. The CEGEPs of Quebec are also unique in their attempt to meld the pre-university and careers programs into one college system, with students beginning with only 11 years of schooling. There are, furthermore, no permanent liaison or coordinating groups between the general education (or Core) area of CEGEP English and the universities, professional accreditation boards, or employer groups.

Finally, it should be remembered that English is not formally considered as a **discipline** in Quebec's college system. (The Parent Report recommendations refer to langue maternelle variously as "common basic courses," "required fundamental subjects," and "general courses" in #87, #316 and #317.) It does not, therefore-like chemistry, mathematics, or nursing-have an established set of objectives that form prerequisites for advanced university work or certification. But English teachers are equally adamant that English not be seen as a "service course" to other disciplines and programs. Core English in the CEGEPs has an anomalous character, required of every student but definable only by its own Cahier criteria.

So, in a pluralistic society, the CEGEPs and English departments within them are highly pluralistic. And, with a twenty-year history of largely independent evolution, the individual colleges have evolved independently and gone their separate ways. But this autonomy that the CEGEP English departments have enjoyed is currently under pressure from forces in society: the pressure of accountability, the pressures of competitiveness in the North American and world economic contexts, and the pressure from the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists for national competency standards both in general skills and in specific technical knowledge. After twenty years, the CEGEPs are again coming under scrutiny from DIGEC and the Conseil des collèges, as witnessed in the major consultation underway in Vers 2000 and the gradual revision of all the academic grids.

This brief review outlines then the contrary forces operating in the system: the pull of standardization *versus* the push of local autonomy. Part of our work this year has been to identify those forces.

II. B. This Year's Consultations with the Network

The major element of our mandate this year has been to get out and meet colleagues to share ideas. Our final report summarizes our curricular findings and recommendations, based on a variety of contacts and analysis of documents and models. We concur with Mann's study of curricular innovation under challenging conditions in New York, an analysis which argues forcefully that unless the classroom teacher is actively engaged in consultation and program design, curriculum will evolve only on paper. Describing in detail the Exxon Education Foundation's Impact II program to improve teacher-to-teacher networking as a way to improve schooling in New York City, Mann concluded that it succeeded because it was user-driven (869). Mann's assessment supports our view that curriculum imposed from the outside cannot succeed, for the best change responds to perceived needs and comes in small increments (865).

1. Departmental Consultations

A major objective of this year's work has therefore been to provide liaison with groups and with individual teachers, to share information along the network and to animate interest and discussion of important issues. From our detailed study of how individual departments organize their curriculum and allocate teaching and financial resources for remedial courses and learning centres, for example, we were able to share some new ideas with others facing similar problems. For our discussions with departments or curriculum sub-groups in departments of English, we have taken a series of focal questions, and discussion has evolved from them:

a. Responses to the Conseil Report: English Instruction in the Anglophone Colleges:

- What do you think of the assessment of the English curriculum in Part I?
- Do you agree with the recommendations in Part II? (See also allocations, below)
- How can CEGEP English respond to the demand for more integration of the objectives?
- Do you foresee any major changes in your program as a result of these recommendations?

b. Your department's assessment of the new high school English Language Arts curriculum:

- What are its key features in methodology, composition, and literature?
- What are its positive and negative elements?
- Does it represent a real change?
- Has your department made any changes as a response?
- Is your department aware of the nature of the 1990 ELA exam and the subsequent MEQ study, Student Writing and its Correction?
- Does your department have regular contact and feedback from the high schools?

c. Allocation and resources:

i) Conseil report re remedial classes

- tutorials
- learning centres
- extra resources already given for language improvement (cf. page 26 of the Conseil Report)
- professional development for all teachers in all programs, re the teaching of language skills.

ii) French Provincial Committee recommendations re. ponderation

- recommended maximum of 100 students/teacher
- ponderation of 3-2-3).

d. Observations on the Curriculum questionnaire

e. Networking and communication

- the topics discussed Context newsletters and the faculty questionnaire.

2. Consultations with the High School Sector

One key element of the research this year was to study the teaching of English in context: in the CEGEP system itself and in the high schools which feed it. We have examined the curricula at the high school and CEGEP level in both the English and French systems, since both fall under Ministry and *Régime pédagogique* guidelines. We have also consulted with graduates of this high school program to gain insight on their perceptions. We have followed that up with examining the reception of the CEGEP student at the subsequent levels: the universities and workplaces which accept CEGEP graduates. Our objective in all of these activities has been to gain perspective on the teaching of English at the CEGEP level and to see how that teaching and the students' preparation are perceived.

We prepared and administered a questionnaire on the high school students' perceptions of the high school English Language Arts curriculum and final exam. Conducted in November, the questionnaire provided information on the student profiles, the students' experience with English in the high schools, and their assessments of their abilities in the six key criteria of the final exam: rehearsal strategies, generating ideas, writing correctly, choosing the form, quality of language, revising and proofreading.

3. Publication of our *Context* newsletter

These perceptions and perspectives have been shared in our direct encounters with groups and individuals. Further, the publication of three issues of our newsletter Context has allowed us to consolidate information into a readable format. All three issues have been mailed to every teacher of CEGEP English and to all interested consultants, teachers, and administrators at every level in the network. These newsletters provided coverage of the following items:

a) Context Number one November 1990 (8 pp):

1. Pedagogical workshops on an abilities-based curriculum

(the Alverno model, implementation at CEGEP de Lévis, how various disciplines in CEGEPs define the basic abilities)

2. Evaluation in the English Language Arts Secondary V Leaving Exam (overview of the test, criteria for marking, results)

3. Conference on the French Colleges CAFs (remediation, tutors, non-credit remediation courses, funding)

b) Context Number two February 1991 (12 pp):

1. The Conseil des collèges Report on English
2. The consultation process of Vers l'an 2000
3. Workshop on collaboration in the classroom
4. English Language Arts background
5. Annotated bibliography on English curriculum

c) Context Number three May 1991 (19 pp)

1. French language university admission tests
2. Press coverage (English and French) of language teaching
3. Research into the teaching of writing
4. High School and College: continuity and change
5. Curriculum Questionnaire: Analysis of faculty responses
6. High school graduate questionnaire: analysis and statistics.

4. Exploration of the abilities of formation fondamentale: A Case-study

As part of her research for the project Renewing English Curriculum, Anne Blott attended a June 1990 training session at Alverno College, Milwaukee with a group of CEGEP teachers. With a colleague from a professional discipline, she then followed that up with classroom applications during the term, discussions, and workshops with various discipline areas. Briefly summarized, three findings can be reported here:

1) If students at the CEGEP level are to take responsibility for their own learning by making intelligent choices and by integrating knowledge and abilities from various discipline areas, it is crucial that faculty and administration do some of this integrative work themselves. Both in the preparation of course materials and the interchanges (written and oral)

among faculty, some shared terminology of general education objectives is vital.

2) Faculty need to explain in a variety of ways, formally and informally, what their teaching goals are. Students need to learn to interpret the formalized language of plan d'études and assignments, for example, if they are to understand what their education is really about.

3) Inter-disciplinary exchanges demonstrate that teachers from many disciplines are in fact working toward similar goals. But these need a shared terminology if the barriers between them are to break down.

Specifically, on the need for clarity in language for the students, it was striking to track the students' progress over a semester in an English course. Given their difficulties in reading comprehension, is it surprising that approximately 20% of their errors in the tests given over the term arose from **not understanding the instructions on the exams**? Again, it took fully ten weeks of the term before the students could generate a list of abilities that they thought the teacher was trying to promote in the course (Context November 1990).

On the importance of disciplines sharing ideas on basic abilities that cross over subject boundaries, Selma Tischer and Anne Blott, two Vanier teachers from different areas, continued their discussions through the following year. (Only a few elements from the year-long discussions and November workshop will be presented here.)

For a workshop at the Intercollegial Development Day, November 7, 1990, Selma (Early Childhood Care) and Anne (English) worked with small groups of teachers, defining abilities in each discipline, finding common patterns, and negotiating common codes to describe them. They also presented some written feedback from their own students, demonstrating student perceptions of abilities demanded in Early Childhood Education and English. The primary goal of the November workshop was to initiate an exchange of views and experiences on teaching to abilities rather than just to subject areas. The initial focus in the workshop was on three basic elements:

A) how teachers in different disciplines define for themselves the abilities they are trying to develop in the students

B) how they use the plan d'études and assignments in describing those goals to the students

C) how aware the students are of those goals, as demonstrated in their written feedback.

The long-range goals were to stimulate further thinking about possible implications for formation fondamentale in the CEGEPs:

1) **locally, at the class and department level**, in the following teaching tasks:

- writing course descriptions

- writing clear plans d'études for the students
- drafting their assignments
- communicating with students about their work.

2) **at the college and inter-college levels:**

- describing curricular aims and objectives
- communicating with colleagues from other disciplines
- communicating about college-level work with people from other levels and domains.

A wide range of disciplines was represented in the 26 people at the November workshop: chemistry, geography, nursing, French, Spanish, economics, psychology, music, German, physical education, business administration, English, and early childhood education. In addition, participants came from academic counselling, human resources, and the journal Pédagogie collégiale.

The workshop asked how the students know what we're "really" trying to do in our classes—the hidden agenda or subtext of the assignments and plan d'études, for example. Again, we were asking in this context, how can we measure our success as teachers as well as theirs as students?

Workshop activities

The session began with individuals generating a list of abilities they are trying to develop in their students. They then exchanged ideas and tried to explain them to a group of 4-5 people. That group then drew up a list of 5-6 abilities common to all, with a further indication of any items that seemed unique to one area.

Variations in wording aside, the following summarizes a **common core of abilities** emerging from the exercise:

1) logical processes: discerning, classifying, analysing, organizing,

2) communication skills : oral/written: values, ideas, understanding, plans, methods, results. Using appropriate formats, structures, and styles.

3) working both collaboratively and independently: (tolerance, open-mindedness, sportsmanship) and initiative and judgement

4) responsibility: self-evaluation, accountability, professionalism,
establishing goals

5) creativity and imagination: integrating disciplines, taking risks, transferring theory to life experiences, intellectual curiosity, sensitivity and openness in perceptions and reading.

6) developing humanity: tolerance, awareness of own values and bias, sensitivity and openness.

This kind of interdisciplinary activity, shared with the students, would help them to integrate their learning in the independent milieu of the colleges. It is an interesting case-study in deriving the objectives of _formation fondamentale_ from current CEGEP teacher practices. We discuss the objective of integration of learning and teaching in Chapter VIII of this report, below.

5. Summary

In sum, during the twenty years since the founding of the CEGEPs—indeed since the founding of the Ministries of Education and of Higher Education and Science—many changes have taken place. What is needed increasingly in such a complex system is coordination and coherence: articulation and intercommunication from level to level. As one striking example, new elementary and high school curricula in English and French (langue maternelle) have been developed and implemented, but their implications for CEGEP teaching have had little attention. Only now are the objectives and the evaluation of the new English curriculum being widely discussed at the CEGEP level. Part of our role this year has been to collect and disseminate such relevant information about teaching and to transmit it along the network. We have communicated this information in three main ways:

1. meeting face-to-face with teachers, consultants, and administrators at all three levels in meetings, conferences, and interviews. A list of persons interviewed this year includes representatives from the Ministry of Education, the DIGEC representative for English, the public school boards, the Departments of Education at Concordia and McGill, teachers in the

Concordia English remedial program, teachers of English in public and private high schools, French teachers and Learning Centre personnel from the CAFs of Collège Edouard-Montpetit, CEGEP de St.-Laurent and CEGEP de Bois-de-Boulogne, the President of l'AQPF, personnel managers from Bell Canada and the CNR, the Dean of Applied Technologies at Vanier College, and academic and career advisors from Vanier College and McGill University.

2. giving workshops and presentations on topics of concern, including the competencies of the CEGEP student, the faculty analysis of English curriculum, the recommendations of the Conseil des collèges, and future trends in college teaching

3. writing and disseminating documents for information and consultation among teachers, students, consultants, and administrators. One example of a publication which went out to all of the teachers was our newsletter, Context, which focussed directly in all three issues on the teaching of English at the CEGEP level. A questionnaire on the high school students' perceptions of the high school English Language Arts curriculum and final exam was administered in November, providing information on the student profiles, the students' experience with English in the high schools, and their assessments of their abilities in the six key criteria of

the final exam. In February, a questionnaire was sent out to English faculty for information on what elements play important roles in influencing CEGEP English teachers' course changes. As a document of consultation, this questionnaire was sent out to solicit information on what influences them in decisions about their teaching and their courses.

II. C. Structures in the English Network

There are relatively few contacts between the English colleges. Physical distance is one factor that isolates them. In addition, the colleges have a relatively stable cadre of teaching personnel after twenty years. Few new teachers come on staff, and the departments tend to operate in isolation, with little involvement with teachers from other colleges. The Provincial Committee for English, which meets 4-5 times per year in Montreal for a few hours at a time, is one of the few regular opportunities for contacts and exchanges. One representative from each college attends and is charged with consulting his or her colleagues on any questions of policy. In addition, the Committee organizes a Spring Conference each year.

The Academic Alliance of Teachers of English is another organization in Montreal which offers throughout the year a series of meetings, workshops and presentations on the teaching of English.

1. Organized Activities of the Network : Conferences

A) Provincial Committee Spring Conference. Each year, members of the committee arrange a conference in Montreal: presentation of a theme, workshops, and the social activities of lunch, bookfair, and wine and cheese. As an example, the April 1991 conference was organized on the theme of "Continuity and Change": the teaching of English in the high schools and colleges.

B) Turning Point Intercollegiate Pedagogical Day During the past year a new organization linking the English colleges has been formed: the Intercollegiate Steering Committee, with representatives from all the major English colleges. As one focus for college teachers interested in exploring general education, it organized the ten-day training session, June, 1990 on an abilities-based curriculum and modes of assessment at Alverno College in Milwaukee. This was followed up with a very successful province-wide pedagogical day, November 7, 1990. Both the Alverno training sessions and the Pedagogical Day are continuing, and the organization shows every promise of becoming a permanent feature of the college system.

2. Publications

There are few regular publications addressed to the English College teachers, apart from newsletters published by their unions. In addition to the standard British, American, and Canadian academic journals in literature, composition, and pedagogy, CEGEP teachers in the province have access to several French journals like Vie pédagogique, Québec français, Pédagogie collégiale, and cegepropos. Specifically focussed on literacy questions and research is the newsletter the LAC Bulletin, edited by Linda Shohet, which originates in the Literacy Centre at Dawson College. This year's three newsletters on renewing CEGEP English curriculum, Context, have been well received by the teachers in the system, but each newsletter demands a lot of time in preparation, writing, editing, printing, and distribution.

II. D. Conclusion

Networks of contacts and exchanges are clearly vital in keeping ideas in circulation and in keeping people in touch. Our experience this year has shown that English teachers enjoy learning from each other and have amassed a great body of experience with teaching English in the unique Quebec context. It has also shown us the value of keeping aware of the needs and perceptions of the students, and of changes in the French colleges, our feeder high schools, and the universities and workplaces. Finally, each teacher in each department has an interest in being informed and consulted on policy changes and recommendations at every level of the education continuum.

Chapter III. Faculty Survey, Spring 1991

In the last week of February we sent a questionnaire and, at the same time, a second issue of **Context** to the 181 teachers on our mailing list. We received 33 replies. We were disappointed by a return rate of 16%, but we found our colleagues' responses interesting.

The goal of this survey was to find out how faculty make curricular decisions about new courses or courses they have changed. In particular we wanted to trace the influence of the already existing networks at English cegeps on curricular decisions. As well, we wanted to survey faculty attitudes towards current research, their secondary and university colleagues, the workplace and professional associations, and language teachers working in the French Sector. With 37 questions over seven pages, our questionnaire may have been intimidating and so discouraged response. For our report, first we discuss influences and the impact of networks on individual, curricular decisions, and then we consider faculty attitudes. Finally, we give an overview of our results and make recommendations.

To process our results, we opened the return envelopes and gave each response a number. We established a data base for the statistical data and entered those results. For the written comments, we established a separate file for each respondent and entered the comments, as required. Our goal was to include every comment. In considering written comments, we went through each record and noted every comment before attempting to establish categories of response. Our database and comment files are available to researchers. Provide a three and one-half inch disc and specify the programs and systems you are using.

A. Curriculum: Influences and networks

Question 1: A new course or a changed course. Some 61 per cent of our respondents described their experience with a new course, 36 per cent described a changed course, and 3 per cent failed to answer this question. We were pleased, even given the limited number of respondents, that curricular innovation was significantly present.

Question 2: Why did you choose the literature? The first three responses to this question were that the teacher liked the literature, that the teacher thought the students would like it, and that the literature dealt with contemporary issues. The fourth alternative allowed the respondent to specify other reasons. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one alternative and rank them. In terms of the first three choices, 24 per cent chose the literature because they liked it, 21 per cent thought the students would like it, and 18 per cent because it dealt with contemporary issues. 28 per cent specified other reasons, and 6 per cent did not respond to the question. When we add secondary and tertiary rankings to first choices 36 per cent chose literature based partially on their own preferences, 39 per cent considered student tastes, and 36 per cent considered that it dealt with contemporary issues. Of the faculty who specified other reasons, two specified declining student abilities, one said that "shorter novels" made up the revised course, and one insisted that the content "did not substantially change." One respondent said the changes were made to increase "variety" in terms of "genre." One chose the literature because "students need to become more aware of the multicultural nature of our country." Others chose to "specify other reasons" so they could underline their response, eventhough their responses might comfortably have fit in the alternatives we provided. One chose the literature to make the course more "Student-centered." Another chose the literature because it reflected that teacher's current interests in Freud. Finally one respondent underlined that the literature in this new course "must be from the past 20 years."

Question 3: Was the literature content reduced or increased? Respondents were evenly divided on this topic. 12 per cent said the literature content was unchanged, 30 percent said it had been reduced, 33 per cent said it had increased, and 25 per cent said the question was not applicable or failed to respond.

Question 4: Was the writing component increased or reduced? 55 per cent of respondents said they demanded more writing, while 12 per cent said they demanded less. 12 per cent required the same amount. 21 per cent of our sample did not respond to this question.

Question 5: If you are giving shorter assignments, can you tell us why. We presented our colleagues with six options, including one where they were able to specify other reasons. None of our respondents said that the sole reason they give shorter assignments is that they are easier to mark. 27 per cent said assignments were shorter because students can control them better. 18 per cent said it was a combination of these first two reasons. Surprisingly only 3 per cent said the primary reason was that they could give more assignments in a semester, but when we add to this its frequency as a secondary response, 30 per cent mentioned it. 27 per cent told us that we were wrong about shorter assignments, that they still demanded the same volume of work. But that number increases to 37 per cent if we include this choice as a secondary response. 15 per cent failed to respond to this question.

Three respondents gave us other reasons. Two gave essentially the same reason: they had added short assignments (in one case, four) and kept the long term paper because "students need more writing opportunities to build up to long essays, and more feedback to reduce tension and stress before long papers." The third said that "more assignments are needed to ensure they do the reading!"

Question 6: Changes in classroom style. Collaborative learning is the big change here: 48 per cent said that the provide more place for collaborative learning, but when we consider the rankings, 60 per cent mention this. Only 9 per cent choose individual student presentations as the most important change, but that figure rises to 36 percent when the other rankings are added. 12 per cent say they give fewer formal lectures, but that figure rises to 39 per cent when second and third rankings are added. 24 per cent said they have not changed how they do things. Of those who provided written comments one noted that changes involved "tightening up standards" and providing a "30 per cent final" done in-class "over a week." Another noted that the emphasis in class had "shifted from theoretical understanding to learning through doing." One respondent did not answer the question.

Question 7: Direct input from students. Not surprisingly 60 per cent of our respondents said they took into account direct input from students, while 36 per cent said they did not. One respondent failed to answer this question.

Question 8: Collecting student advice. Faculty universally insisted on telling us this, so we have changed the sub-heading. Of the faculty who took into account "direct input," 50 per cent used informal methods, 40 per cent used a questionnaire, and 10 per cent used both. One respondent enclosed a questionnaire. Another said that the best way of finding about a class was to ask them what they liked most and least. Still another makes formal evaluation an assignment: "I ask students to write me a letter evaluating their own progress midway through the course and analyzing reasons for their progress or lack of it. This gives me valuable feedback."

Question 9: Influence of faculty in the department. Conversations with fellow English faculty influenced 60 per cent of our respondents, while 36 per cent were not influenced in this way. One respondent failed to answer this question.

Question 10: What other department members said. When we asked this question, we were hoping to find "what . . . your fellow faculty told you," we were hoping for practical advice. We got that in just four of the 19 written comments. One suggested that colleagues endorse a move to "shorter novels" because students could not "handle" longer works. Another noted working together with a friend developing a "reader response" approach to material. A third noted that a friend had suggested a "matter of fact, almost clinical" appraoch to the sexually explicit material in White Hotel. The fourth noted that departmental colleagues had "reinforced" the direction this teacher was taking toward "short, controlled assignments with models. Practical editing and rewriting."

Other respondents limited themselves to revealing the source of discussion or the topics discussed. Two comments noted that the adoption of a common introductory course was the source of a good deal of departmental discussion. Writing assignments figured as a topic in six responses. Other topics included "learning strategies," "texts," and the "teaching experience." Three respondents indicated that they talk with only a portion of their colleagues: "people in Kaleidoscope," "one or two colleagues," and "friends."

Question 11: Influence of faculty outside the department. Only 36 per cent of our respondents said they had sought advice amongst faculty outside their department; 57 per cent had not, and two respondents failed to answer this question.

Question 12: What faculty outside the department said. Eight respondents provided written comment. Three of the respondents said their conversations with faculty outside the department focussed on student weaknesses, while the other five sought models and inspiration, sometimes far afield.

First, the Greek Chorus on student abilities. One respondent noted that "other faculty in" mathematics, computer science, and psychology "all told me they were experiencing the same problems with more demanding and/or complicated courses." Another said they had discussed "whether or not my observations about student interests and abilities were accurate." The third noted that there was agreement in discussions with other faculty that "the major weaknesses in students are undisciplined work habits, poor reading skills, and a lack of understanding of the logical process which reasoning (and an essay) requires."

One respondent who sought inspiration farther afield was moved by completing an M.Ed. at McGill. "Patrick Dias" and the "McGill Faculty of Education staff," the "readings and seminars," and "involvement in the new, integrated language arts curriculum . . . in the high schools . . . influenced me." Another mentioned "Linda Shohet's workshops at Dawson" which provided "ideas for collaborative learning, journal writing, reading and writing strategies." Creative Arts was the inspiration for a third - particularly "their approach, sources, trends, tactical considerations." Another "talked with psychoanalysts about some of the material I covered." They helped "link" the texts to the "psychoanalytic-therapeutic process." This respondent was able to "implement much of what [was] learned" at "a conference on psychopathology and creativity." Our last respondent said these conversations were a two-way street. Faculty had asked and learned something about "texts" and "writing assignments." Now these people understand "writing needs and processes." On the other hand this respondent had been given "tips on using journals" from humanities teachers.

Question 13: Discussion with the Curriculum Committee. Did our respondents "engage in substantial discussion with the curriculum committee?" 21 per cent of our respondents did, and 70 per cent did not. One respondent said the question was not applicable, and two failed to answer this question.

Question 14: Can you summarize that discussion. Only six respondents included written comment here. Perhaps the others find that their curriculum committee "is a rubber-stamping device - our way of coping with the pluralistic tendencies of the department," as one respondent put it. Another noted that since "the course outline is a staff outline, only the reading lists differ." Perhaps established common courses are no longer the subject of ongoing Curriculum Committee consideration and that accounts, in part, for a lack of discussion at this level.

But other respondents noted the development of a new, common course had engendered intense discussion. We were told that matters were "much too involved to comment on. If you clarify your intentions, our area might share its minutes and documents with you." Another noted that "our entire area discussed the direction of the new course" and that they had "agreed on a variety of genres and more process." A final respondent did not know if the discussion was "substantial" but noted that the "committee's perception of student needs and interests" had always been asked. This respondent did not "get very much detailed feedback."

15. Influence of sector heads, DSPs, academic advisors, or other cadre. These people have little impact on curriculum: 87 per cent of our respondents said they had no impact on the course under discussion. Only 9 per cent said they had, and one respondent failed to answer the question.

16. What these administrators said. There were five written comments here. One respondent noted, perhaps ironically, that "we haven't see a live DSP around here for about two years," but another remarked "the faculty dean supports this course." The respondent whose course dealt with literature and psychoanalysis said that "the professional development office was particularly helpful in directing [the respondent] to other sources." Another, commenting on the continuing development of an "Introduction to College English" pointed out that adminstrators had underlined "the need for extensive remediation" since "acceptance averages [had] declined . . . over the past two years." Our final commentator noted ongoing consultations with "learning centre personnel:" "we learn a lot from these professionals."

17. The impact of reading. 60 per cent of our respondents said their changes were influenced by reading, while 36 per cent said they were not. One respondent failed to answer this question.

18. Were you influenced by any reading in particular? We received 15 written comments. Literacy across the curriculum was mentioned in our original question and was the subject of seven comments - four positive and three negative. "LAC is an influence, but no single article comes to mind," is a typical positive comment. Another said "I have enjoyed LAC in a general way;" and in the same line we also read that "LAC generally has had a strong impact on my thinking. Our fourth respondent in this category said "I read LAC for assignments and am continually influenced by theories of student-oriented process."

The negative comments about Literacy across the curriculum carried with them the strong undercurrent that this was not fit material for academics: "I find the above mentioned (Literacy across the curriculum) totally useless for my purposes." This respondent said later in the questionnaire that "keeping up in the field professionally and participating in it through publication is far more important than 'pedagogical' considerations." Another was equally as blunt: "a publication like Literacy across the curriculum is a total and absolute waste of time and money. The writing is tendentious, tedious, and full of jargon. It writes the kind of language we should teach all our students to avoid." The final respondent was concise: "I don't do any junk reading."

Other comments underlined the difference between those who are interested in pedagogy and those who are not. Academics read "specific journals in the content area of my course." They do "reading, yes, but not the items listed above." If they are interested in multiculturalism they "have been following the political debate in Canada and have noted how intolerant Canadians are to minorities" and "address this problem" in their courses. Those interested in pedagogy read a lot of it. One reads "great wads of photocopied articles from a wide variety of sources, including from the good people at

Dawson. All very helpful, and very influential." Another respondent, who "love[s] reading the journals" admits to picking "stuff up like a magpie." Still another, who cites "no one article," reads to fulfill a curiosity about "innovative teaching methods."

Only three of our respondents mentioned specific books and articles. They were Richard Mitchell's *Less Than Words Can Say*; Lester Daigley's, "Judging Writing: Judging Selves," in a unspecified issue of *CCC*; and, finally, "Essentials of English: A Document for Reflection and Dialogue," *College English* 45(Feb.1983).

One respondent included a long list of influences as a response to Question 23 on other input which, in reality, belongs here. "People who have made a difference in my classroom teaching [include]: Peter Elbow, Toby Fulwiler, Gabrielle Riev (*Writing the Natural Way*), Richard Lanham (*Style: An Anti-Textbook*), Elaine Maimon, Harvey Weiner, Linda Shohet, [and] most of my students.

19. The influence of the universities, the high schools, and the workplace. 36 per cent of our respondents said these areas had some influence, 60 per cent said they had none, and one respondent failed to answer this question.

20. Specific influences from outside the system. We received 12 written comments, of which five showed a direct awareness of the new English Language Arts program in the high schools. Four others admitted an indirect influence from this level.

One respondent, and this is the only written comment made by this person, cited "high school program awareness." Another respondent remarked on the spreading knowledge of what is required by the "English Leaving Exam from high school." The department planning "a transitional course for all incoming students" had had "several sessions with high school teachers." They had "learned about their new curriculum," particularly that "students have little or no exposure to transactional writing." Another respondent, apparently from the same department, confirmed these observations. Along the same lines, another teacher remarked that "knowing what high schools are doing helped me decide where to articulate my courses . . . I'm sure that writing academic essays about literature is relatively new to students." Awareness of the high school curriculum gave one teacher "a better sense of what I could do."

The high school curriculum is apparently the subject of informal discussion between students and faculty and among faculty: "the only input was from my students and from my colleagues within the department." Another teacher, who had developed a course on Canadian Immigrant Literature, said student comments about the lack of "novels or short stories about Greek (Italian, Cambodian, West Indian, etc.) immigrants" at high school had been taken into account. For one teacher the high schools had had an impact in the sense that "the goal of my course has always been to undo the good, moral work" done in the high schools.

CEGEP teachers are sometimes influenced by the universities. One was influenced by "scholarly journals" and "meetings," but only "in the universities, never the high schools." Another avoided duplications in course reading lists by consulting "with the Canadianist at Bishop's." Another admitted that "the universities have made me more aware of the relativity (or the exclusiveness) of the traditional WASPM course and the need to change it to suit the new kind of student clientele in our classes. This also implies the inclusion of more women writers."

One surprising note is that none of our respondents were influenced by the realities of the workplace.

21. The Influence of workshops and conferences. 40 per cent of our respondents had been influenced by conferences and workshops, while 57 per cent had not. One respondent failed to answer this question.

22. Specific workshops and conferences. Our 13 respondents who attend conferences and workshops, attend many activities of this type. All attendees provided written comment, and seven of them listed more than one influence. As our most prolific respondent (both in terms of the length of commentary and the number of influences) put it: "I go to LAC workshops, Springboards, CCTE conferences, the Learneds . . .

Inkshed. I learn so much, mostly about teaching (and) incorporating writing, but also about new approaches to literature and how to use them creatively." This teacher did not share with us the secret of unlimited professional development funding.

Dawson College's Centre for Literacy was mentioned positively by six of our respondents, in-college pedagogical days by three, and the fall 1991 college wide, pedagogical day on Alverno College by two. Three of our respondents mentioned "academic meetings," while two mentioned classes and seminars - one at McGill and Concordia and the other a workshop on psychopathology and creativity at the Montreal General Hospital.

23. Other things that had an impact. The 20 respondents who provided written comments for the most part treated this question as an invitation to talk about themselves. Some underlined their sense of themselves as good teachers (and good people), others discussed their sense of a generalized decline in student abilities, some talked about burnout, and still others underlined their recent interests and insights. Their remarks often overlapped these categories, but this question provided an overview of the state of mind of some of our teachers.

The comments of 10 of our respondents indicated a strong vision of themselves as good teachers. Some say they are "alert to what the students do and say in the classroom." My course is a result of "listening to students" and "my own personal research in the field," according to one respondent. "What most influences my decisions is the research and writing I do," said another, adding that "students for years, and more so now have been telling me they are bored with teachers who teach them as though they were in highschools . . . I spend time with them individually or in groups outside of class." Some assert that the content of their courses comes from "listening to [the] criticisms" of ordinary people. Another teacher stressed personal tolerance and "my experience as a parent." "Pluralism . . . is preferable to the 'intolerance' some reform might lead to." Another mentioned the influence of "personal growth and change:" in some ways this teacher has become "mellower [and] and more receptive to student eccentricity and differences" but at the same time is "crankier" and a "real stickler" for standards. Curricular change at one college developing an introductory course was "an entire year of soul-searching." One teacher described education as a matter of "tapping my life experience" combined with an ongoing dialogue with treasured authors like Whitman, Blake, and Carey. Finally, a respondent underlined "curiosity about native lit[erature] and other new books now being published." What we have here is the definition of the good teacher: someone who listens to students, who actively reads and does research, who is available, who is tolerant of students and the public at large, who still insists on standards, who loves literature, who is driven by curiosity, and who cares. We note that networking is not seen as a fundamental quality of the good teacher.

Three of our respondents used this section to underline their sense of a decline in student abilities. For one, "a more reduced literary selection and shorter essay assignments were the result of a general lowering of academic standards - because of the students' increased weakness in English skills." Another said students need "more grammar and basic literacy skills: they are ill prepared to write a 2000 word essay. They don't read [and] understand the text well . . . . They don't work unless there's a grade."

Four respondents made remarks that indicate the presence of burnout. "The course was dragging, [and] I was bored, [so] I thought I'd begin with an easier genre," said one. Another respondent said the changes in the course were the result of aging: "I'm getting older and don't [have] the energy to work." Yet another remarked that changes were the result of "boredom and the need to stimulate myself." This teacher was suffering from "exhaustion" and felt "the need to have students stimulate on another rather than carrying the brunt [myself]." Finally, one teacher developed a course, in part, from "fatigue with courses that I have taught too often."

Three of our respondents stressed academic interests and recent insights. For one, the changes were influenced "by keeping up in the field professionally." For another "literature courses in McGill's English Department" introduced the respondent to "post-modernism, reader response, structuralism and post structuralism, [and] deconstruction." These led to classes where "an exploration of what 'literature' was, rather than telling them what it was" provided a focus. Another, in addition to citing courses at McGill, noted an ongoing interest is "PBS TV" and new arrivals at the bookstores and the library as a source of change.

B. Faculty attitudes

The 14 questions in the second part of our survey presented respondents with a series of statements and offered them five options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. We report the results below

24. As an English teacher I feel isolated. 21 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 21 per cent agreed, 21 per cent were neutral, 25 per cent disagreed, and 3 per cent strongly disagreed. Three respondents failed to answer this question.

25. Pedagogical days at my college deal with topics that directly effect me. 3 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 37 per cent agreed, 24 per cent were neutral, 9 per cent disagreed, and 15 per cent strongly disagreed. Four respondents failed to answer this question.

26. I'd like to read more material that deals with what happens in the English classroom. 18 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 43 per cent agreed, 12 per cent were neutral, 3 per cent disagreed, and 18 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

27. When workshops take place and I can not attend them, I'd like to read a summary. 21 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 21 per cent agreed, 21 per cent were neutral, 25 per cent disagreed, and 3 per cent strongly disagreed. Three respondents failed to answer this question.

28. Contacts with our secondary colleagues are lacking. 21 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 37 per cent agreed, 18 per cent were neutral, 12 per cent disagreed, and 6 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

29. I really don't know what is going on at other English CEGEPs. 9 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 30 per cent agreed, 12 per cent were neutral, 28 per cent disagreed, and 15 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

30. I am well-informed about current research done by teachers, DGEC, and the Conseil des Collèges. 12 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 21 per cent agreed, 18 per cent were neutral, 34 per cent disagreed, and 9 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

31. Contacts with our university colleagues are lacking. 39 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 39 per cent agreed, 9 per cent were neutral, 25 per cent disagreed, and 6 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

32. I receive formal feedback on English curriculum from our graduates. None of our respondents strongly agreed, 24 per cent agreed, none were neutral, 37 per cent disagreed, and 33 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

33. We need better contacts with the workplace and professional associations. 24 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 36 per cent agreed, 21 per cent were neutral, 12 per cent disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

34. We need structures which help reinforce the value of teaching English and defend the worth of the profession. 49 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 24 per cent agreed, 15 per cent were neutral, 6 per cent disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

35. Research in my area done in Quebec has little impact on me. 15 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 34 per cent agreed, 21 per cent were neutral, 18 per cent disagreed, and 6 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

36. I'd like to know what my francophone colleagues in langue maternelle are doing. 27 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 30 per cent agreed, 18 per cent were neutral, 9 per cent disagreed, and 9 per cent strongly disagreed. Two respondents failed to answer this question.

37. Times are tough. As English teachers we should keep our heads down and make as little noise as possible. 3 per cent of our respondents strongly agreed, 3 per cent agreed, 12 per cent were neutral, 24 per cent disagreed, and 49 per cent strongly disagreed. Three respondents failed to answer this question.

C. An overview of our results

1. Our sample

The teachers who responded to this survey have opinions they want heard. The disagreements from one faculty member to another are less important than the commitment that all of our respondents show to the profession and their particular views of it. Some of our respondents try and involve themselves in every area, but for the most part our sample breaks into two indentifiable groups: those with a stronger interest in pedagogy, language as process, and new classroom strategies and those with a stronger interest in English as an academic discipline. Both these interests have networks of a sort, even if that is limited to a few, like minded "friends" or the "people in Kaleidoscope." To see how vociferous the disagreements between these groups can be, review the responses to Question 18 on the influence of reading. Beside Question 30 - "I am well-informed about current research done by teachers, DGEC, and the Conseil des Colleges - one respondent noted: "Even if I had it [information about current research] I wouldn't read it." Beside Question 27 - When workshops take place and I can not attend them, I'd like to read a summary - another wrote: "No theory - no American College crap - 'what happens.'"

2. **Networks** It should be clear that there will never be one network, but rather networks. Our colleagues are working in what we might term relative isolation. Faculty with similar opinions and interests find each other, and it is in the nature of such groups to first determine the difference between us and them. There are, in most colleges, faculty with the energy and inclination be everywhere at once, but this is not universal and not a model that is realistic for most teachers. Any policy designed to enhance networking will have to start with what is already there. The goal of such a policy will be to build contacts between teachers and to acknowledge the contributions of teachers to their colleges and education. A policy like this might, at the same time, serve to enhance standards in those key, basic skills - reading and writing.

3. Networks and the challenge of formation fondamentale

The Conseil des Colleges, in accepting the diversity of courses we offer in English, has insisted that we make sure students have basic skills. Recommendations of this sort always strike a raw nerve. Are we to be responsible? What are people in the other departments doing? The colleges should see this report as an opportunity to bring faculty together around the central questions of formation fondamentale. Clearly the Minister may impose a leaving exam, and we will discuss that later, but equally as clearly it is time we spread the responsibility for formation fondamentale as widely as we can in each college. We have made specific recommendations in our final chapter.

One distressing finding of this survey is that English faculty have little contact with teachers in other departments. Only 36 per cent of our respondents said other faculty gave them input which they had incorporated in their courses. But when we come to consider the written comments, we find they have defined "faculty outside their department" so as to include teachers at McGill, psychoanalysts, and presenters at Linda Shohet's workshops. In the sense that we meant the question the percentage is much lower.

Chapter IV. The English Language Arts Curriculum: Innovation in the Teaching of English in the High Schools

IV. A. Overview

The key link in the continuum of public education in Quebec is that between the high schools and the post-secondary education offered by the CEGEPs. These two levels of education are both public and free to all eligible students in the Province. Indeed, the CEGEPs were created to extend the training of Quebec's young people beyond the level of high school and thus to qualify them for the increasingly complex demands of the post-industrial age.

For the purposes of this study of English curriculum in the CEGEPs, we consider it vital to understand the revolution that has taken place in the teaching of English in the high schools (and elementary schools) and to explore the implications of that change for the teaching of English at subsequent levels. Part of our work this year has been a very detailed study of the new Language Arts Curriculum: its official Ministry documents, scholarly literature underlying it, interviews with its key Ministry *responsables*, meetings and interviews with English school board consultants and practising teachers, and workshops with teachers and consultants implementing the methodology and evaluation of the program.

To strengthen the link between these two levels, we have also conveyed information and concerns in writing to representative groups and included information on the program in all of our newsletters and our student and faculty questionnaires over the year. In the final phases of our work this year, we have been consulting with individual teachers, the Faculties of Education at Concordia and McGill, the English Provincial Committee, English departments and curriculum committees, and representatives of the careers faculties and administrations. Central focusses for those consultations have been the English Language Arts Curriculum itself and the series of relevant Conseil des Collèges reports since 1988—documents which are important for our study because they 1) insist on the importance of clearly-articulated objectives for these interlocked levels and 2) analyse the current difficulties that students have in successfully making the transition from one level to the next:

1. *L'Harmonisation du secondaire et du collégial: l'état et les besoins de l'enseignement collégial. Rapport 1988-1989, 1989*
2. *L'Enseignement de l'anglais dans les collèges anglophones. 1990*
3. *La Qualité du français au collégial: éléments pour un plan d'action, 1989*
4. *La réussite, les échecs, et les abandons au collégial. Rapport 1987-1988, 1989.*

IV. B. History and Design of the English Language Arts Curriculum

1. Administration and Structure

The English Language Arts Program has been developed through the two developmental units of the Ministry of Education: curriculum development (DFG) and evaluation (DDE). Direction formation générale developed the program and the accompanying guides. The other branch involved in the process is the Réseau, which involves coordination, 11 regional branches, and la Direction des services educatif aux anglophones. It is charged with facilitating the implementation of the programs, and its work is on-going. (In the English sector, when school boards opted out of the system of multiplicateurs, the DSEA began to perform that function, to make contact with the community, identify issues, and make the developmental units easier to work with.) We have received a great deal of information from the _responsables_ for those areas of the Ministry in our interviews and workshops this year: DSEA: Allan Patenaude; DFG: Gayle Goodman; and DDE: Bev Steele. The English Language Arts curriculum continues to develop in a systematic way, with an admirable level of teacher participation. Teachers are chosen through the three-year rolling over of members on the ELA Advisory Committee, and their mandates are staggered, so that 1/3 are changing every year. Topics emerge from teachers' interests and suggestions, and the committee comes to consensus on suggestions for topics and guides.

It is important to note at this point that the English Language Arts Curriculum extends through the whole of the students' schooling in the elementary and high schools, both public and private, throughout Quebec; but our focus here is on its secondary school phase only: the teaching of English as a mother tongue at the high school level.

2. History of the ELA Curriculum

The main planning stages of the new curriculum in Quebec were 1978-1983, although its roots go back at least to the mid 1960's. The Green and Orange Papers on Quebec education had been generated by the government and recommended sweeping changes in curriculum in the key document The Schools of Quebec: Policy Statement and Plan of Action, 1979. Until the new Language Arts curriculum was developed, Gayle Goodman noted, there had been no curriculum at the secondary level—only a list of books and a tradition of teaching to the provincial exam. The Language Arts curriculum grew out of research into trends in literature and language teaching, primarily those in England, with the British Institute of Education Language and Learning program. A seminal month-long Anglo-American conference had been held in August and September of 1966 at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire at a time of major expansion at the secondary and post-secondary levels. This conference focussed primarily on English at the elementary and high-school levels. The fifty participants included experts in literature and linguistics like Albert E. Marckwardt, Wayne C. Booth, and Charles Muscatine. In addition, experts in education and the pedagogy of English included James P. Moffett, James Britton, and Harold Rosen. The latter three names are still frequently cited in discussion of the key influences on the Language Arts program in Quebec schools. The Dartmouth Conference of 1966 had been seminal, and "turned English curriculum inside out", Gayle Goodman stated (interview).

Mr. John Gaw was the **responsable** for English Language Arts at that period and drew together a committee of teachers, boards, consultants from urban and rural contexts: the Secondary Language Arts Advisory Committee. With their major focus on "student-centred learning," the committee researched internationally and established a production committee: 10 teacher-consultants from McGill, boards, and teachers. The process took four years, until the new program was defined in the program document, with its final list of six general objectives. They examined Manitoba, Alberta, and American examples, as well as studies of curriculum in England and Australia. Primary authorities studied were James Britton, James Moffett, L.S. Vygotsky, Andrew Wilkinson, Harold Rosen, Tony Adams, and Louise Rosenblatt. A guiding question was "How does our thinking line up with what is going in in other jurisdictions?" Alan Patenaude commented that in the area of language development and writing, "The research of James

Moffett loomed very large in our work." The ideas of of Louise Rosenblatt, in her Literature as Exploration, were important in planning for the study of literature. A central conference which also proved very influential on the Quebec planners was the CTTE conference in Ottawa—a meeting of many of these influential thinkers. The British Council was sponsoring lectures, and the Quebec government encouraged exploration of new models (interview).

3. Design of the Program

The key ideas for the new program were the centrality of the student, a spiral curriculum, and an integrative or whole-language approach. A key principle also was that students learn in a context appropriate to their world, so that the teacher would focus initially on the student interests. Gradually, the teacher leads the student to broader contexts. This methodology of approaching texts attempts to get away from the magisterial lectures.

The "whole-language approach" has its critics too, particularly in the focus on the student's perceptions and the down-playing of the professional teacher's role. Concordia English professor and director of the university's diagnostic tests calls the approach "psychotherapy, not teaching." Personal expression of feeling does not exercise the full range of spoken and written responses to literature and opinions. Students at the high-school level need more consultation with trained teachers, not just with their peer-group (Moore, "Write-Offs").

In "the spiral curriculum," each grade level of the program aims at the same objectives with a variety of contents. The six general and specific objectives of the program are summarized in the document *Secondary School Curriculum: English Language Arts I-V* (1982) , outlined briefly below:

> 1. The student will show an understanding of the communication process
>
> 2. The student will show an understanding of the nature and function of language
>
> 3. The student will show an understanding of the types of discourse
>
> 4. The student will show the ability to understand an oral, written, or visual discourse
>
> 5. The student will show the ability to follow an appropriate process in composing an oral, written, or visual discourse
>
> 6. The student will show the ability to develop his/her own viewpoint through participation in the communication process(33).

The program was being written by practising teachers, and ideas were tried out, then assessed. No one would claim that all the ideas were new, but the enthusiasm of innovation was invigorating for the teachers and consultants engaged in the process. Twenty-seven curriculum guides were being written at the same time: optional models for implementing the program in the classrooms. Well into the hundreds of teachers were involved in writing those guides, which continue to be revised. New ones are also still in production: "Responding to Literature" in Secondary I, Media, Journalism, and Oral Expression: a teacher-developed curriculum. The current Literature Secondary IV & V guide, for example, contains many anecdotal accounts of what happens in teaching poetry in a classroom at that level. Alan Patenaude commented that it was virtually a transcript on students responding to "Dover Beach" in a classroom setting. Patrick Dias of the Education Faculty at McGill also filmed classes responding to literature: engagement with a piece of discourse, identifying and articulating responses, sharing with others, verifying, etc. One example is a video of Linda Fernandes's class working collaboratively on the Ted Hughes poem "The Thought Fox." These curriculum guides suggest a wide variety of texts, as content is not prescribed in the program. The program is designed to give the teacher a far more responsible role, as he or she has the freedom to assess the needs and interests of the class at the local level. The guide is only a guide—not a fixed pattern, but a suggestion for implementation.

The new Language Arts Program concentrates on two uses of language: 1) "as a means of coming to terms with ideas and experiences and 2) as a medium for communicating with others" (Secondary School Curriculum, English Language Arts I-V 11) . Primarily, it is a renewal of the reader-response approach to literature, with emphasis on small group work and collaborative learning. In its writing component, it emphasizes "process rather than product" : prewriting, drafting, revising, polishing, often in a group setting. It also integrates composition with literature, rather than teaching them separately. It does not specify a particular content, for example a body of literature to be studied. The choice of texts is largely up to the instructors, and the MEQ book list is now outdated. Budgets for new books in fact are severely limited, so to some extent the new curriculum suffers by having to continue with the old books. Generally, the program concentrates on modern fiction, with a smattering of poetry and drama-including a play by Shakespeare .

As specific examples, following are representative lists of works drawn up by three of the participants at a February 23, 1989 workshop held at Vanier College. The sources of the information are Linda Fernandes, Michael Leclerc, and Noreen Barrett:

English Language Arts-Levels 4 and 5

"Selections are made from the following titles. Students are expected to read 3 novels from the list (or from others recommended by teachers and approved by department head), at least 2 plays (one Shakesperean), several poems, short stories and pieces of non-fiction. (The figure in parentheses identifies the secondary grade level.)

NOVELS: Of Mice and Men (4)
 To Kill a Mockingbird (4)
 Fahrenheit 451 (4)
 Animal Farm (4)
 The Pearl (4)
 A Separate Peace (4)
 Ordinary People (5)
 Lord of the Flies (5)
 Flowers for Algernon (5)
 Uncle Tom's Cabin (5)
 Hard Times (5)

PLAYS: *The Winslow Boy (4)*
The Admirable Chrichton (4)
The Caine Mutiny Court Martial (4)
Julius Caesar (4)
Hamlet (5)
MacBeth (5)
Glass Menagerie (5)
Death of a Salesman (5)

LAVAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

St. Pius X Sec IV & V Plays from Shakespeare

The Glass Menagerie
Death of a Salesman
Arms and the Man
Yesterday the Children Were Dancing
Man in the Moon Marigolds
Twelve Angry Men
MacBeth
Merchant of Venice
Romeo & Juliet
Julius Caesar
Hamlet (sometimes)

St. Pius X Sec. IV & V Novels

The Catcher in the Rye
Alas Babylon
Lost Horizon
The Pigman
Stone Angel
A Separate Peace
Lord of the Flies
Duddy Kravitz
Luck of Ginger Coffey
Where Nests the Water Hen?
The Tin Flute
Contender III
Cue for Treason II
Deathwatch III
Lord of the Flies IV
The Great Gatsby V
All Quiet of the Western Front V
Of Mice and Men IV.

To follow up on the reading lists and conclude this overview, we think it important to signal at this point that there appear to be significant problems in reading comprehension among young people graduating from our schools. Michel Therrien, President of the Quebec Association of Teachers of French, commented in an interview that the high school program in French as a mother tongue includes instruction in reading comprehension and that, nevertheless, this is an area in which the students fare badly on their final exam.

Reading comprehension is not targeted directly, however, in the English Language Arts exam. The authors of the Parent Report, however, were very conscious of the importance of reading, reading instruction, and research into reading (Recommendations 198-208). They recommended, for example, that high school students read "a minimum of 30 volumes a year chosen by them from a list of 100 or 200 books" (#201). Research and discussion of reading and writing deficiencies in high school and college students have often linked the two problems. (In our report, this vital problem of reading skills is discussed in detail under **IV. F. "Implications for CEGEP English Curriculum, 4) Reading Comprehension"** below.)

IV. C. Implementation

The English Language Arts program was put into place level by level until it became compulsory right through secondary V in June of 1990, with the first compulsory province-wide exams on the new program administered at that time.

We might recall Gayle Goodman's comment at this point, that the Dartmouth Conference "turned English curriculum inside out." As difficult as it might look, implementing **new course content** would be relatively simple compared to the challenge of implementing an **entirely new methodology.** It is often said, for example, that it would be very difficult to impose even a range of recommended readings on teachers in the CEGEP English curriculum. The new Language Arts Program in the elementary and high schools goes much deeper into the heart of teaching—the way the teacher handles material with the students. In this new methodology the teacher must be much more flexible and responsive to individuals in the class. The teacher must yield control and allow for discovery learning, rather than magisterial lecturing. Indeed, this same teacher (like many in the CEGEPs) who has been teaching for more than twenty years is now invited to turn his or her thinking "inside out". Not everyone has been ready for that sort of fundamental change of approach, and implementation of the program has had to meet some challenges.

Many roadblocks to implementation can be identified, for example 1) an aging teaching personnel with little incentive to make major changes and 2) limited "hands-on" experience with the program. Up to 1990, it is true, an energetic minority of teachers were fully committed and engaged in the new program. But it will take more time and a larger proportion or critical mass to make a real impact throughout the system. As CECM English consultant Linda Fernades observed at a workshop on the new program and its implementation, "Teachers sell teachers [on innovation]. Consultants do not." Other challenges include 3) inadequate funds for new texts and other resources to help the program take off and 4) shrinking enrollments in the English sector and a concomitant burn-out among the teachers and/or administrators.

Resistance to the Language Arts Program has come from the teacher unions as well. Part of the problem in that instance is that the final exams are designed to be graded by at least two teachers, but the Collective Agreements do not require teachers to mark the work of any students except their own. In a few cases, the in-service training and work was also weak in the planning stages, so that the program is not fully integrated in all schools.

Again, the guides are revised and reworked frequently, but they are still not a complete success, Gayle Goodman stated. One difficulty is that they are written by a core of about 42 people out of a total of 2000 teachers. Local conditions, individual approaches are difficult to reflect in a single document. Again, Curriculum has a small budget within the Ministry, which funds only one 2-day conference annually for teachers working on curriculum. Teachers are in the third year of a retraining process, bringing together classroom teachers and McGill professionals from the Education

Faculty. (By contrast, the Ontario Ministry of Education goes much further in professional development and engagement of the local teachers in preparation of guidelines for courses.)

Gayle Goodman suggested that, even after the ten-year planning process, it takes five years for people "to risk to pronounce on ways of changing, and then twenty years to see what changed and what did not." Program adoption is gradual, as teachers gradually accommodate themselves to the new methodologies and approaches. One benefit of the new curriculum, however, is that it gives a new vocabulary, a common language and terminology for discussion, province-wide. And once that vocabulary is mastered and the evaluation and program guides are well assimilated, the program should bring more coherence into the teaching of English at the elementary and high school levels. Overall, the implementation problems of the program simply illustrate an axiom of curriculum theory: teacher ownership and engagement at the grass-roots level is the most important criterion for the success of any change.

IV. D. Evaluation

1. Description of the Evaluation

At present, although the new curriculum is in place, the Ministry still controls 50% of the final grade of high school leavers through its year-end final examination. (Quebec has one of the few systems in Canada to retain the centralized exams.) The pass mark has been set at 60%. The exams are set at the Ministry by the DDE, but they are marked locally in accordance with criteria developed in consultation with groups of teachers in a production committee. So, in addition to the challenges of implementing the program cited above, the local teachers are also now learning to accommodate the new province-wide exams on it and to master the correction criteria designed to make results reasonably consistent across the province. The final exam in English Language Arts at the Secondary V level was written province wide in June of 1990—for the first time since the new curriculum began ten years ago. Approximately 10,000 students sat the exam, spending five hours for preliminary portfolio building activities and then an additional five hours, over two half-day sessions, in individual production and completion of the two final writing samples. The preparation phase took the students through individual and group responses to a handsome thirty-page booklet of literature and graphic art. Students were encouraged also during this phase to articulate links with the work they had studied during the school year. The final two days were spent in writing: one creative piece, which was to reflect in some measure an idea from the resource material and one transactional (or expository) piece based on at least one piece from the exam package as well as on materials studied during the year's classes.

During the preparation phase, students were encouraged to share and discuss ideas in responding to the material and in rehearsal strategies. They knew that they had the two half-days' writing ahead of them and built up the portfolio over the five hours of preparation. These portfolios were kept at the school overnight and the students used them in the formal written exams, developing what they have already begun. Students were also given a copy of the grading criteria. The following items were in the exam booklet, with an epigraph from Jean-Paul Sartre: "Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself . . . . You are free, therefore choose":

1. **I Saw a Man Pursuing the Horizon**, by Stephen Crane, a poem
2. **A Manly Heart**, by Hugh Garner, a short story
3. **Boucher going for Gold**, by Ken Danby, a painting
4. **To Certain Friends**, by F.R. Scott, a poem
5. **Akua Nuten (The South Wind)**, by Yves Thériault, a short story
6. **Drawing**, Robert Day, a cartoon
7. **Jigsaw II,** by Louis Macneice, a poem
8. **A Promised Land,** by Garret Keizer, non-fiction
9. **Looking in the Album**, Vern Rutsala, a poem
10. **Greenpeace Canada**, non-fiction
11. **Sonnet XCIV,** by William Shakespeare
12. **Three Cheers for Berliners**, by Marlis M. Wehr, non-fiction
13. **Enemy of the People,** excerpt, by Henrik Ibsen, a play
14. **Provincial**, by Miriam Waddington, a poem

15. **Wilderness. The Choice**, by Toni Onley, a painting.

The Ministry (DDE) sets the exam, in consultation with the Curriculum responsable. Thus, Gayle Goodman writes a set of guidelines called " the Definition of Domain," which includes key recommendations that the students be required to produce more than one kind of writing and that all papers be double marked to ensure reliability. In addition, again in consultation with teachers and English consultants, the marking criteria are set at the Ministry level. But the marking of the individual papers is done in the first instance at the local level, by the individual teacher. By contrast, Bev Steele observed that in Ontario the school sets the exam, but the Ministry can call in the exam and literally give the school a report card saying "please adjust your marks, we do not accept this exam as reflecting the guidelines we asked you to follow." In Quebec, the marking of the papers and the attendant observation of the students' performance in preparing the papers is done by the regular classroom teacher.

This province-wide test on the new program was developed by a production committee of eight, representing a variety of approaches and opinions. Models used and modified to the Quebec reality included the following, according to Bev Steele:

1) adaptation of portfolio of writing.

2) British secondary examinations council work and Paul Brock's model in New South Wales. "With a language development theory, there are very few models," she stated.

2. Challenges in Evaluation

In response to our questions about the difficulties of her evaluation dossier for English Language Arts, the DDE Director Bev Steele cited the following:

> "Problem #1 in high school leaving, large scale, external exams: the role of process: should it be given marks? How to evaluate the thinking processes: brainstorming, note making, learning style.
>
> Problem #2 : the role of collaboration, how to evaluate the individual's contributions to a group and the value of his own, individual, work .
>
> Problem #3 : Imposing a particular exam style across 10 000 students. We interpreted the program our way with that exam, regardless of the particular rehearsal strategies of individual teachers (interview)".

The test was not compulsory at first, but optional; and only 400 copies were ordered out of a possible 10, 000 in 1988. However, in 1989 4,000 were ordered. Once the exam was compulsory for everyone, the full implications of this form of evaluation were experienced by schools, teachers, and 10,000 students throughout the province. The papers were all marked in the schools in June, using six criteria, each of which had to be passed in order for the student to receive a passing grade: rehearsal strategies, ideas, form, quality of language, mechanical precision, and revision and proofreading. During the summer, a second marking team met for an intensive review of the marking, focussing on 526 papers which represented the Lowest (25-59%), the Middle (60-69%) and the Upper (86-100%) ranges. From these were culled a further 11 "anchor papers" to represent the key features of those low-middle-high ranges. An in-service session on evaluation held later, in November, exchanged ideas on evaluating the new high school leaving exams in English. The purpose of the session was summed up in a document included in the registration package: "a rethinking and review of many evaluation practices, [which] include, among others, the sensitive issues of subjectivity, weighting of criteria, adjudicating mark discrepancies, time requirements, and recording methods. The whole examination process has been studied thoroughly and reported on in Student Writing and its Correction, which is the third of a series of reports in a longitudinal study of evaluation in the program.

Evaluating student performance with the current test has proven to be very difficult, in fact. Since 93% of the students passed the June 1990 exam, it is clearly not a precise instrument for measuring student performance. To begin with first principles, the test can cover only a small part of the full curriculum. Given the focus on formative evaluation in the program, it would also be more consistent if the exam were used only as a confirmation of the assessment of the students's classroom teacher, who knows the child's work through the experience of a full year or more. Instead, these five hours of writing count for 50% of the final grade in the final year of high school. Indeed, a portfolio of work drawn from a longer period of the student's work has been suggested by Gerald G. Auchinleck and Michael Thomas of the P.S.B.G.M., based on models used in Western Australia (interview). The current exam is summative evaluation, weighing 50%, and primarily a test of student writing. Nothing in the test evaluates understanding of two of the original objectives of media literacy and oral communication, for example. Other objectives are not tested in the exam either, for example the nature and function of language.

The DDE report Student Writing and its Correction points out that the Ministry's summer remarking of selected papers from across the province proved that fully 28% of this representative sample of the papers showed no preliminary portfolio activities, although again those are essential elements in the curriculum and evaluation (6). Again, the report revealed two findings which it said put into question the reliability of the evaluation:

> The specified criteria are not being applied consistently, and the safeguard of double marking cannot be applied in many cases. The MEQ markers were not affected by either of those factors . . . . Even so, over 28% of their scores had to be arbitrated in order to ensure reliability.
>
> ....
>
> the other disturbing disclosure is the evidence that 122 mark categories were adjusted by the MEQ teacher-correctors. . . . .
>
> If reliability and consistency had to be monitored closely in the MEQ's correction it becomes easy to see how reliability and consistency are difficult to assure

> across the province where many of these optimum conditions do not exist (8).

In the matter of what kinds of writing the students did on the test, it is clear that they selected the simplest and most personal forms and avoided the more challenging kinds of writing even when they were expected to produce an analysis. Evaluation through a single, weighty, uniform exam set by the Ministry will always be problematic because the Language Arts curriculum makes a lot of different writing and communication demands on the students. And the students and teachers from the various schools are geographically isolated from each other.

Evaluation of the evaluation continues. A key off-shoot of the November in-service sessions will be a teaching handbook on evaluation, reflecting recent experience. A group of volunteer teachers will follow up on the workshops, refining scoring criteria, reducing them and simplifying instructions. This consultation group will recommend ways of sustaining the pedagogical ideals of the program right through the evaluation process.

IV. E. Comparison of the French and English Language Arts Curricula

In 1979, when Education Minister Camille Laurin called for a complete rethinking of Quebec's education system, in

"The Schools of Quebec: Policy Statement and Plan of Action," he could not have envisaged that the English and French planners would produce essentially parallel reforms. Returning to their colonial roots-the English to England and America, the French to France and Switzerland-they found models of language as process. Even though their current classrooms are strikingly similar, representatives we have consulted continue to maintain stereotypical views of what the others are doing: the English are muddling through, the French insisting on correctness in their usual Cartesian way.

The essential approach is the same: the student at the centre, the focus on his response to texts and his expression of ideas. But there are also important differences. In the French schools, Quebec culture gets most attention. In the English schools, literature is drawn from a broader spectrum, with relatively little attention to Canadian works. Summative evaluation is also different. The French Secondary V exams cover written French, oral French, and reading comprehension. The English exams evaluate the writing process: two writing samples, one creative and one 'transactional,' based on responses to a variety of literature and graphics. Evaluation is also controversial in both sectors.

1. Back to the roots

When the new curricula were being planned, the research literature was dominated by the concepts of process and discourse. Students were to be coached to read and write

through following the steps that researchers had analysed in these processes. Accordding to Jean-Guy Milot, the effective teacher "fera tout et sans détour pour amener ses élèves à avoir les mêmes comportements et les mêmes attitudes que ceux qu'il a lui-même quand, dans les activités non-scolaires, il lit, écoute, dit et écrit quelque chose (60).
This echoes Donald Murray's remark, quoted by Winston Emery of McGill's Faculty of Education, that teachers of writing should themselves be writers (interview).

The Swiss and French methods of teaching French through the process approach have been adopted at both the elementary and secondary levels in Quebec, modified by the strong Quebec content. The English adapted the curricular model of James Moffett's Student-centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13, with readings drawn largely from American literature, with some additional works by British and Canadian authors. (As mentioned above under B. 3., the dying textbook publishing business in Canada and the budget cuts for books have often restricted choice to the big American publishers.)
The former NAL (North American Literature) Program has also been cut to about 10% in the schools.

2. The educational transaction in both systems

The goals of the new English curriculum have already been described in detail. In the French sector, "L'objet de la classe de français n'est plus strictement l'étude de la langue et de la littérature, mais déborde dans la domaine de la communication, des discours et, spécifiquement pour la secondaire, des valeurs socio-culturelles. . . la place centrale [est] donnée au processus d'apprentissage" (Simard, 67).

An important indicator of what is happening in English secondary classrooms is Secondary Language Arts: Summative Evaluations, Sample Questions. The 17 model evaluations included here demonstrate that "examination procedures and evaluation tasks should reflect classroom practices" and that these "tasks can be planned in such a way that in themselves they become opportunities [for students] to learn and to become actively engaged in learning" (5).

Judith Elson of Centennial Regional High School designed a sample examination that illustrates the process-orientation and collaboration emphasized in the ELA curriculum. Students read Rudyard Kipling's "If" and prepare a transactional (expository) and creative response with three hours of classroom time for each activity. (This, of course, closely follows tha kind of summative evaluation the students will have in the June provincial finals for Secondary V. Having read the poem "several times," students write down their "initial" reactions, and discuss them in " groups." In these discussions students make notes on "one another's ideas." Each student then chooses "a line (or lines)" dealing with one idea as the basis of the composition. Students are required to be specific about the line(s) chosen, the purpose, the audience, and the level of formality. They write first drafts and then revise and correct them with a partner. They then produce a final draft.

For the three-hour creative response Judith Elson's students are to apply the advice given in 'If' to a character they choose from a novel or a play that they have read that year. They then consider "to what extent the character has followed the advice in the poem." Again the students write down ideas and then discuss them in groupsbefore preparing their first drafts. Students consider voice (Who are you? Yourself? The character's parent? etc.), purpose (Approval? Disapproval?), audience, and form. They are expected to make "close reference" to the other work they have chosen. Once the draft is complete students "revise and correct" in pairs, then write their final drafts.

In both compositions, students are marked on context (40%); their understanding of proper usage and language conventions (30%); the blending of audience, purpose, and tone (10%); their rehearsal strategies (10%); and structure (10%).

Similar strategies can be found in the "Cahier pratique" in each issue of Québec français, but rather than reviewing a sample of this material, we felt it more appropriate to focus on the March, 1987, issue which provides an overview of the new French program. In all cases, the translation is ours.

Michel Ménard, the Principal at l'École Notre-Dame de la Garde, describes the changes this way:

> The new pedagogy has provoked a good deal of thought about the role of the teacher. Exercises just for the sake of exercises have been sent to the dungeon. Exercises, where they are necessary, now help the students acquire the knowledge needed by them in a particular project of communication.
>
> The teachers at my school increasingly understand that they must place students in situations where communications normally take place and that they must intervene in the process to assure the success of the students' communications . . . . The rhythm of each student's learning is respected, and the desire to help individual students succeed has replaced the red pencil (Desrochers-Brazeau, 76).

We might also consider the opinions of Claude Simard, who is involved in teacher training. The underlying principle of the new program in French is that

> the classroom, itself, become an real place for communication; that is to say for real exchanges between the students and between the professor and the students.
>
> In insisting on creating situations for writing which are significant for our children and for adolescents, the programs that we have now center the pedagogy more on the learner, and less on the material he or she learns. More than ever before, the French Class must take into account the interests of the young and the world in which they evolve. The styles of discourse of the modern world - newspaper articles, TV shows, advertising, films, etc. - are given the recognition that only works of literature had in the past. . . . The learner should find, as much as possible, in the classroom the conditions in which language is learned naturally (67).

Consider, finally, the remarks of Jean-Guy Milot on the place of dictation, that warhorse of the traditional curriculum in the new classroom:

> One indication of the dynamism of the new program which will change the pedagogical practice of the past is not the presence or absence of dictation in class, but more the place given it in relation to the practice of writing and the activities of auto-correction (62).

This is a clearly a new approach to the teaching of French, and the teachers support it. Commenting on the pressures for correct grammar that the University admission tests are placing on our French CEGEPs and so on secondary schools, Michel Therrien, President of AQPF (Association of Quebec French Teachers) and Professor of Education at the University of Montreal, said that the secondary teachers he represents are just not going to go back to the old-style teaching of grammar

3. The touchy question of evaluation

Both systems would like to avoid this topic, but for different reasons. In the French system, secondary schools are taking pressure from an increasing drop-out rate, but they are also under scrutiny for their results in the provincial exams. And beyond that the French CEGEPs find themselves expected to produce grammatically skilled students for Laval and the University of Montreal. In the English sector the persistent question is "What do these marks mean?" In terms of last year's exam, the answer was not much. Bev Steele, who is in charge of the evaluation dossier at MEQ, told us last fall that a mark of 65 or below was "suspect." Fran Davis, the CEGEP liaison person in this area takes a harsher view in a recent article in the VCTA Newsletter: "a 75 per cent average from high school does not guarantee that the students have ever read much of anything," and "most . . . students will be starting from zero in terms of cultural literacy." We should remember that 93 per cent of those writing the English Exam passed—a much higher rate than the French students. Michel Therrien commented that 40% of the French students, for example, failed in reading. At last November's follow-up session on evaluation of the English tests, teachers had problems assigning consistent marks to sample papers drawn from the June 1990 exam.

4. Summary

In Quebec, both English and French public sectors have adopted a process oriented curriculum which focusses on the student's ability to communicate. In both, sectors the classroom experience is comparable and many educators think student writing has improved. There are differences, particularly in the strong Quebec emphasis of the French curriculum. One problem in both sectors is reading comprehension. Michel Therrien identifies it as the major problem of current secondary graduates, and Helen Wehden of the Dawson Learning Centre agrees. Perhaps one consequence of the new programs is that students do not read enough.

Educators and education usually rouse someone's dissatisfaction. We should not be surprised by some public responses to the new secondary curriculum. And we should not be surprised by attacks on our CEGEP work. That does not mean we should prepare for a siege, nor does it mean that should abandon everything we have done in favor of the new. Looking at these two secondary curricula we should target ideas about teaching, because there is much that is positive here. But at the same time, we should be aware of the pressures from both sides on us and on our French colleagues. One of those pressures is to harmonize our teaching with that of the secondary schools, and we must understand it better if we are to ease that transition for our students. Another, increasingly, is the pressure for measurement of skills: minimum competency tests in writing skills for university admission and professional certification.

IV. F. Teacher Training and the ELA Curriculum

1. A Sample Education Faculty Course

How are teachers trained for curricula like the English Language Arts program in Quebec? To find some answers we asked a number of people we interviewed this year and reviewed Education Faculty documents. Winston Emery, in charge of the course dealing with this aspect of curriculum and instruction at McGill, told us that this two semester course is divided into two equal sessions combining theory and practice. In each session students spend six weeks on theory and research at the university and seven weeks practice teaching. Classes are designed as models of the collaborative techniques that animate the new ELA curriculum and they allow considerable scope for student interests and group work.

If students are to work effectively together, they must get to know one another. To that end the first assignment pairs students, who - on the basis of appearance alone - are encouraged to write thumbnail biographies of the other. These, of course, are the subject of much comment and correction. Once group feeling has been established, students are given a bibliography, told they must read two books that semester, and turned loose. They keep journals as they read and can change from their initial choices if they are not happy. But the two book requirement remains. As they move through the semester they are encouraged to take ideas they find in their readings and develop lesson plans. These are presented for class comment (and they may ultimately be tried out in the schools in the last seven weeks of the semester).

When the students return from seven weeks of classroom experience in January, there is a wide-ranging discussion of their experiences. The purpose of this is to identify topics in pedagogy that they might like to make the subject of a major project. These projects are group work, the final version of which is due at the end of the semester, but is also presented in class. At the same time students are introduced to methodologies that help them plan major units of instruction. Of course there are another seven weeks of teaching in the secondary schools in this semester, and throughout all of this Professor Emery is available to students and serves as a mentor during their apprenticeship.

2. A Broader Training in English Studies: Literature and Composition

The other crucial element of teacher preparation for English is what the students learn in their English courses in the Arts Faculty at McGill. Symptomatic of the lack of coherence in the planning of public education in Quebec is the way that the two faculties work in isolation. Future English teachers do not take their Education Faculty orientation to the new ELA Program until they have already completed their English courses in Arts.
So they might well have missed courses that would provide some depth to their training in English—and specifically to the demands of the new English program. It was striking that both English consultants at the PSBGM commented that the new teachers are not prepared for the full six curricular elements in the program. What is missing, in their view, is more attention to two major objectives: the nature and function of language and understanding the uses of media. Again, they thought that personal response to literature had become the dominant objective (Thomas, Auchinleck, Interview).

Harry Hill, Concordia English Professor and director of the Concordia University Writing Test program, criticizes the low standards of the Education Faculty certifying teachers "who would get a marginal pass" on the Writing Test at Concordia. He is also critical of the high-schools' approach to writing as "free-flowing self-expression". When it comes to editing, students need more input from well-trained teachers, not just peer-editing. The English test coordinator at Bishop's, Stephen Sheeran, also deplores the 20% failure rate of anglophones. These students cannot produce 300-500 word samples of "acceptable prose", even when dictionaries are provided. He blames the "lack of rigour in the entire education system, from Grade 1 up to and through university." It should be noted that neither of these universities use grammar tests to screen students; both use holistically marked writing samples, short argument essays on a student's choice of topic (Moore, "Write-Offs").

We should observe finally that teacher education at McGill is on-going. The fact is that very few new English teachers are being trained and hired for Quebec schools. Much of the training is in professional development for teachers who have taught for many years and are having to rethink their approaches in line with the new program. That is one more reason that innovation is difficult to implement.

IV. G. Implications for CEGEP English Curriculum

1. Overview

As we stated at the outset of this chapter, it is logical that the high schools and colleges should be viewed as interconnected levels of learning. Reports such as L'Harmonisation du secondaire et du collégial argue strongly for more congruity as a way of helping students make the transition from high school to college. In the view of teachers, consultants, and the Conseil des collèges, it is time to bring the two systems into synch. The Conseil specifically recommended that the two Ministries work together to define clearly what is distinctive in their objectives. Of particular interest to CEGEP English teachers are the following Conseil des colleges recommendations for the two levels:

#3 to define general education at the secondary level and formation fondamentale at the collegial

#4 to ensure continuity in foundational skills like English / French mother tongue, analytical skills, abilities to synthesize information, and organize work

#5 to ensure that there is continuity in the teaching of English / French at the two levels and that the action plan begun at the secondary level is completed at the college

#9 to establish first year structures at the colleges to promote integration of the students.

#14 to try a modular approach in career programs at the college level, each module to include the specialized, complementary and core courses.

These recommendations seem to have had little follow up, to judge from our discussions with English departments in all the colleges and the Dean and curriculum chairmen for departments of the Faculty of Applied Technologies at Vanier. In order for changes to occur, there must be more concrete action plans and discussions between concerned groups. Primarily, that report and *La reussite, les échecs et les abandons* were concerned at the high rate of failures and drops outs from college—particularly in the crucial first year and in some careers programs. Often, it was the Core subjects of English/French and Humanities/Philosophie that were dropped or failed. As recently as February of 1991, Bengt Lindfelt of the Conseil is quoted by Yves Breton, a researcher for ANEEQ (L'Association Nationale des Etudiantes et Etudiants du Québec) as stating that the drop-out rates still continue to climb.

As evidence of serious concern about coordinating the high school and CEGEP English curricula, we can also cite a selection of comments from CEGEP faculty in various colleges, taken from the "Curriculum Survey" conducted as part of last year's research:

1. Lack of clear distinctions between what the colleges are expected to do and what has been achieved (in high schools) and can be expected at university or in the labour market. (Vanier)

2. Lack of agreement about the level of challenge in reading and writing requirements encourages mediocrity. It makes it difficult to offer and keep going any courses which allow students to reach beyond what they have already grasped. (Vanier)

3. High School>>>>>>>>>>CEGEP<<<<<<<University
(process) ? (canon)
How do we provide for our students coming from HS programme and going to university? (Marianopolis)

4. Evaluation, coherence with secondary level approaches. (Marianapolis)

5. How do we distinguish one level from another: high school, college , university, (+ working world?) Where are the gaps and overlaps? (Vanier)

6. Standards of literature courses at lower levels, high schools and university (St.Lambert)

7. How to make CEGEP something more than a continuation of high school and relevant to student needs.(Dawson)

8. The fact that incoming students are more poorly prepared than ever with regard to vocabulary, grammatical awareness, ability to think logically, concentration, and basic historical awareness; and that there seems to be no concerted attempt afoot to remedy this, either at the high school level or in CEGEPs. From what I know of the new high school Regime, things are only going to get worse with regard to the teaching of composition at CEGEP, students are so deficient, and the nature of remedial teaching so delicate, that a one-term (15 week) course is never enough to do much more than get started. I think it extremely important that an effort be made to make it possible that teachers can have the same class for two semesters in a row. This especially applies to composition, but it wouldn't hurt in literature either.(Dawson)

9. Do high schools and elementary schools realize how much students are missing basic reading/writing skills? What has happened to grammar at the pre-CEGEP levels? (Champlain St.Lawrence) (18-21)

In addition to reviewing these concerns, this year we have surveyed incoming students and analysed research on cognitive skill development and related it to the high school and college classrooms. Succeeding sections of this year's report present a full discussion of these student perspectives, cognitive skills, and some of their implications.

2. The Perspective of Methodology

The student-centred high school classroom of the English Language Arts program stresses personal responses to literature and collaborative learning. This style of learning is not the norm in the college classroom, and the university-bound student will find the "magisterial" lecture still the dominant mode. The student aiming for a career in the technologies will also find that employers value independent decision making and the self-starter's capacity to conceptualize and complete projects. No single type of learning fits each student, of course, regardless of the level. But as all students advance into post-secondary education, they learn to learn more independently. It is significant in this regard that in the 1989 "Vanier College Graduate Survey" conducted by Student Services, graduating students from all four faculties were asked to rate how much their education at Vanier contributed to their growth in 24 different areas (questions 60-83). The three areas listed below were rated the highest by the students:

How much did education at Vanier contribute to your growth in :	Very Much	Some-what	Very Little
63. Working independently.	55%	33%	12%
65. Learning on your own.	54%	35%	10%
67. Using the Library.	59%	32%	9%

So the CEGEP English teacher eases the transition from elementary and high school methods to those of college level and beyond. The college English classroom will combine the student centred approach and the lecture method, for example.

3. The Perspective of Content

English at the college level emphasizes content: literary approaches, historical and social backgrounds, biographical information, literary terminology, research and documentation methods. Again, writing demands more objective, structured, reasoned modes rather than the personal and expressive. And students are challenged with analytical reading. What skills and content should the colleges build on given students' previous work?

a) Communication: skills in speaking and group work continue to be important in most fields, both during formal schooling and in the job market and life-long careers

b) Writing: the writing process, with more focus on revising and polishing, longer writing assignments, more "transactional" writing assignments (rhetorical writing), more focus on research skills, library work, documentation, the research paper, computer-assisted composition. A full report on the June and summer evaluations of the high school leaving exams in English: *Student Writing and its Correction* reviews the major writing problems of high school students and gives detailed marking descriptors:

Lowest (25-59%): lack of control; little sense of audience; obvious lack of interest or engagement; weak language skills;

> own writing forms; mixed up names, titles; could not connect with works read during year.
>
> Bare Pass (60-69%: (This group is the most volatile and difficult to mark consistently—where we should look to define our problems, the report suggested.)
> evidence of engagement, strongly affective in writing; rudimentary sense of forms and structures, thread of an argument, knowing language weakness, worked to try revising; had some redeeming feature that pulled them through.
>
> High Achievers (86-100%): Questioning, probing, taking risks; able to weave and integrate ideas; showed independence in choice of topics; mastering development, mapping of ideas; variety, richness precision of ideas and language (some tendency to overkill!); flawless in terms of mechanics, excellent revision and organization (11-33).

Reporting to the Provincial Committee, Bev Steele said that many students—especially the weakest ones—chose the affective response simply because it was easier. By contrast, the stronger students were able to cope with "the higher mental order skills of interrelating and synthesizing ideas to be recommended for the colleges."

c) Interpretation of Literature (both literary and non-literary texts): systematic analysis of genres, modes, techniques. In I.A. Richards's *Practical Criticism* (1929) experiments with university students analysing poetry showed their frustration and errors of interpretation when texts were isolated from contexts. Current literary theory vastly expands the range kinds of analysis the adult reader brings to a text: its philosophical, political, linguistic, and historical perspectives. To build on the Language Arts Program in literary analysis, students should be taught to see texts as part of a larger fabric. Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as*

Exploration (1976) makes the same point: the fullest appreciation of literature is not only personal and aesthetic response but also an awareness of social and historical contexts (23-24, 63-64). She illustrates the importance of literary history as a vital integrative discipline:

> . . . the various processes of social history may often be studied more dramatically through literary history than through any other phase of man's activities. . . . Literary history reveals clearly the nature of the individual's relations to the social group, as well as the nature of the forces moulding the group itself. The student should be helped to apply to other phases of man's life the ideas concerning historical processes derived from literary history (250-251).

Thus, from one of the major books which shaped the Language Arts Program we deduce that the study of literary texts at the college level should include instruction in the historical, social, and biographical contexts that inform their full interpretation.

The literature in the program is heavily weighted in fiction, but in college the concept of genre , as well as a wider range of genres are taught. Most ELS texts are modern with little "historical, traditional, canonical, cultural heritage" perspective —which is stated in the college English Cahier as an objective. The selections also lack immediacy: content and works by contemporary writers, perhaps because of the prohibitive price of new Canadian books and the persistent budget cuts in Quebec education. Readings are largely American: the Quebec and Canada focus as well as world literature should be added to broaden the students' horizons.

In non-literary texts, comprehension of structure, argument, and implication as well as distinguishing facts from opinions are examples of important abilities for the informed readers of any kind of text. There are some intriguing opportunities here for interdisciplinary work and attention to "literacy across the curriculum."

d) **Reading Comprehension.** Discussion of weak reading and writing skills in high school and college students often link the two problems. Wheeler, for example, identified poor reading habits and lack of exposure to challenging and interesting books as a primary cause of "the new illiteracy":

> . . . the reading crisis is one cause of the writing problem. Students who find reading a chore will inevitably find writing difficult. When students enjoy reading, they gain not only familiarity with language but respect for writing. Books that engage a student's interest enlarge his vocabulary and his mental experience (3).

At the Continuity and Change Spring conference of the Provincial Committee for English, Helen Wehden of the Dawson College Learning Centre had statistics for past performance on the Nelson Denny, which she compared with 1990 scores. They show that today fully 45% of the Dawson students read **at or below the grade 9 level.** Only 49% read at or above the grade 11 level. The English colleges are attempting to cope with the limited reading abilities of many students, through their Learning Centres, tutorials, remedial English courses, and mentor programs. Important research in this area at the college level is also underway at Vanier, Champlain, and St. Jérôme, for example, as presented in the AQPC Colloques in June of 1991: "Networking for College-level Students: A Strategy to Facilitate Reading Comprehension. . . "; "Success in College;" and "Learning to Learn."

College-level work requires college-level reading skills, and yet it is clear from the literature and from entrance tests at the colleges that students are graduating from English Language Arts under-prepared for the demands colleges will put on them as adult readers. The amount that students are required to read, the complexity of that reading, and its systematic analysis (oral and written) all need increasing attention in the English Language Arts and college English programs. But it is not the exclusive province of English departments to teach students to read and understand all the content areas. Reading comprehension is truly an ability that goes across the curriculum and should be the responsibility of all teachers. In the case of the severely underprepared student, again, remedial programs have to be put in place, staffed by specialists and funded. The recent Conseil Avis on l'Engseignement de l'anglais makes welcome recommendations for increased institutional support for literacy skills: funding for the support of teaching, for Learning Centres, and for faculty development in teaching literacy skills for all teachers. Chall's comment sums up the importance of this question for all programs and disciplines: "The problem of reading and literacy for today is that higher levels of reading are needed by more and more people in every country. The stage of reading development needed today to do the jobs available is the highest ever" (146).

All college programs must continue to expose students to challenging reading and to test through written and oral responses the students' understanding of the text and their ability to question, analyse, and draw implications.

4. Conclusions: ELA as a Case-Study

The English Language Arts Program is a case-study in curriculum reform in English in Quebec's public education system. For the CEGEP English teacher, it demonstrates both the challenges and the rewards of wide-ranging curricular change. One of its positive features is the degree to which faculty have been engaged from the beginning in both the design phase and in the operational phase, with the writing of the Guides. Assessment is just as difficult for the high school teacher as it is for us, and the summative exams are difficult to grade fairly and reliably. But even with the assessment dossier, teachers are actively working out new marking criteria and fine-tuning grade consistency. If CEGEPs introduce exit tests in English, we can learn a lot from the practices and experience of our colleagues in the high schools.

It is striking that high school teachers and consultants report that some current constraints on the implementation of the new program stem from the perception that the CEGEPs demand certain prerequisite skills. (Specifically, the five paragraph essay and research paper.) In fact, too little communication has gone back and forth between the two levels to clarify what activities and abilities should be emphasized by each one. Judging from the official _Cahier_ of the new English Language Arts program, again, there was no consultation with representatives of the colleges in the planning stages of the curriculum (5). These consultations are now underway, as the program is fully implemented and impacts on all the colleges. With increasing pressures to "harmonize" the two levels, it makes sense for both levels to exchange ideas and work together.

Key people we have interviewed at the Ministry have offered a variety of recommendations on how colleges should follow up on the Language Arts Program. Alan Patenaude at MEQ suggested that the spiral curriculum should broaden to include the colleges and recommended that both creative and transactional writing be continued. He also recommends more collaborative learning in the classroom. Writing, reading, speaking should be embedded in all the programs. He regarded 50% of the classroom time desirable in a variety of interactive learning. Bev Steele commented that "I think we shortchange our kids in scientific writing, and they are not getting enough writing in other disciplines. They tend to work in literature only, and they do not write enough variety of forms. Language across the curriculum has bombed across this country. In French, it is called 'Intégration des matières,' and we don't give enough attention to it. LAC teaches reasoning, and that is necessary for every subject."

Gayle Goodman stated that CEGEP-High School consultation is informal, and tends to involve the same people again and again. There is too little feedback from what consultations do occur: information is shared, and then it does not seem to get wide distribution: "The consultation does not get reported widely enough." Gayle suggested that the CEGEP level was a "semi-permeable" membrane, receiving students from high school and moving them ahead from that knowledge base by preparing them for university. For the vocational or professional students, she also suggested more focus on oral skills. However, literacy is the right of everyone, whatever his final career will be. "All should have exposure to great literature and writing experiences." For development of curriculum at the CEGEP level, it is important to map out the principles first, including the psychological, emotional, and cognitive development of the students. In this regard, she recalled the old APEX program in the high schools, in which the courses were structured on an ability level and the course books specified what the expectations were. Even the big developmental gaps could be bridged with that kind of curriculum, she suggested.

The consultants we interviewed at the two major school boards gave a variety of opinions on the integration of the high school and CEGEP objectives for the teaching of English. At the PSBGM, Gerald G. Auchinleck, Director, Academic Services and Michael Thomas, Director, English Studies noted that some areas defined in the ELA program do not get enough attention in the high schools: Media Literacy, Nature and Function of Language, Comparative Linguistics, and World Literature. These would be obvious content areas to develop at the CEGEP level, Michael Thomas suggested. They felt that college-level English evaluation should be by tutorial system, classes mixed first and second years—no divisions between levels. The colleges should remediate the skills of weak students if they think this desirable. Teaching English at the College level should be literature based, with more sophisticated models, critical approaches to literature, study of the language, with more oral work, and important attention to media (a social necessity in their view.)

Sylvia Chesterman, Linda Fernandes, Anna-Maria Scerbo, and Gerry O'Neill at the Montreal Catholic School Commission suggested several ideas on the teaching of English at the CEGEP level. Secondary teachers, like their CEGEP colleagues, are often blamed for students' language problems in other disciplines. Morale suffers when English teachers are expected to shoulder the full burden of "literacy across the disciplines." It important for English teachers at both levels not to be overly harsh in marking students' work. Feedback from high school students after their initial encounters with CEGEP English teachers gives the impresssion that college papers are marked harshly. Students speak of their college teachers as punitive markers who do not communicate well enough so that the students can improve.

On the subject of literature, the MCSC consultants suggest that the colleges should be giving students a survey of English literature. "They're ready for it when they reach your level," said Anna-Maria Scerbo. They concurred that CEGEP was the stage of learning English when it was time to make sense of the discipline.

Finally, both the PSBGM and MCSC interviews touched on the subject of teacher training at the CEGEP level. Linda Fernades asked, "Shouldn't we all be trained teachers?" Both Michael Thomas and Gerald Auchinleck noted that there was little attention to pedagogy at either CEGEP or University levels. Historically, they thought that there had been a recommendation for teacher training for CEGEP faculty, but this had not been followed up. [Recommendation 157 of the Parent Report recommends "that a teacher training course equivalent to a complete semester be added to the diploma required for teaching a the pre-university and professional level."]

There is clearly much room for further discussion and sharing of concerns to harmonize the objectives and methods of these two levels of teaching English in the public system. The network needs to be strengthened to reduce misinformation and coordinate the energies and ideas of these teachers, who all share a professional commitment to the teaching of language and literature. An impressive American model is the coordination of English teacher goals and curriculum through the NCTE "The English Coalition Conference" outlines, which distinguish the teaching aims and curricula for the "high school strand" and "college strand". Further, at the college level, curriculum is described for three distinct levels: Freshman English, General Education, and The English Major. These are the kinds of distinctions that the CEGEPs need to coordinate with the ELA Program.

Chapter V. 1990 Student Survey

In November, 1990 we surveyed 203 of our incoming students, roughly 10 per cent of the freshman class. We distributed instructions, questionnaires, and opscan sheets to our colleagues, who in turn administered the survey to their students in Introduction to Literature and Effective Reading and Writing. The instructions and the questions we asked are reprinted in an Appendix. In May, we reported both the raw statistical data andthis overview in Context, sent to the CEGEP English teachers. The opscan sheets were processed using programs developed by Data Processing at Vanier College. Students in Language Use 1 and 2 were not included in this survey.

Our goals were to gain some indication of who our students are, how they fit into our curriculum, what sorts of experiences they had in the Language Arts Programs at secondary school, and what strengths and weaknesses they bring to the study of English at the Cegep level. Our survey is an initial effort in this area. We do not view these results as definitive, but we do believe our findings will give some focus to researchers who come after us. Some areas that might benefit from future study are noted in the conclusions at the end of each section.

1. The first-year students at Vanier in 1990

There are more women (54.6 per cent) than men (43.8 per cent)in our general population, but when we look at these students in terms of the language they speak at home, interesting changes occur. In terms of the anglophone students, the balance is almost equal with 50.5 per cent men and 49.4 per cent women. Amongst allophones, those who speak a language other than French or English at home, we find that 38 per cent of this part of our sample are men and 62 per cent women. Similar figures appear for our francophones (41.6 per cent men; 58.3 per cent women) but here the low numbers in this portion of the sample make us hesitate to draw a conclusion. But the question remains, where are the allophone males? They appear not to be at big city, public cegeps, like Vanier College.

When we look at the responses to Question 3 (Are you preparing to go to university?) and Question 4 (Which language do you speak at home?) together, it appears that many more allophones and francophones are attracted to our careers programs than to our general, university-bound patterns of study. While overall 48.2 per cent of our students are anglophone, 10.8 per cent francophone, and 40.3 per cent allophone, relatively fewer anglophones (14.7 per cent of the total anglophone population) choose a careers path than allophones (21.4 per cent of that group).

a. How our students fit into the first year curriculum at Vanier

Of our sample 76.3 per cent took Introduction to Literature, our standard first year course, while 23.6 per cent of them were screened into Effective Reading and Writing on the basis of a written composition which all students are required to complete as part of their admission to the college. These numbers change when we look at them from the perspective of the language spoken at home and from the perspective of whether or not students are in a careers program. Only 17.8 per cent of our anglophone students took Effective Reading and Writing, but that number grew to 25 per cent for our francophones and 30.9 per cent for our allophones. The numbers are equally striking for careers students: fully 36.5 per cent of them take this remedial course, while only 20.3 per cent of their university bound colleagues find themselves in the same classes.

b. Adequate resources for formation fondamentale Should English programs in cegeps with a concentrated allophone population and an increased number of students in careers programs be given additional resources to deal with the problems in formation fondamentale these students present? It is a question that will have to be addressed.

As well, we note that 26.6 per cent of the men find themselves in Effective Reading and Writing, while only 21.6 per cent of the women are in the same classes.

2. Vanier students and language courses at the secondary level

Secondary school language courses receive a mixed review from our students as a whole: 39.9 per cent of our students were neutral on Question 14 (The Language Arts Program in secondary school challenged me. I was stimulated.) Some 31.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 25.5 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. 1.8 per cent of our sample failed to answer this question.

There are, however, interesting differences between our sub groups on this topic. Of the men, 35.5 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only 18.8 per cent of the women felt this way. As well, the responses of our university bound students were far more positive than those headed for careers: respectively, 33.2 per cent and 24.2 per cent agreed or strongly agreed. Our francophone students were most positive with 58.3 per cent of this small sample saying they were challenged by their courses.

a. Collaboration

Collaboration is supposedly one of the cornerstones of the new curriculum, and we were interested in finding out just how much time was spent in collaboration at the secondary level. In Question 16 we asked our students: "How much of your class time did you spend in a group or with a partner discussing readings and preparing responses?" We offered them five responses ranging from 10 per cent to 50+ per cent in intervals of 10. When all the responses were taken together they divided almost evenly between the categories. The highest was 40 per cent collaboration with 22.6 per cent of the respondents.

Again there are interesting differences amongst the sub groups. When we look at the 40 and 50+ per cent categories, 31 per cent of the men remembered that they collaborated at these higher levels, while 49 per cent of the women placed themselves there.

b. Reading

Question 17 presented students with the statement that "the reading in secondary English dealt with subjects that interested me." The numbers in our five categories from strongly agree to strongly disagree were 5.4, 34.4, 38.4 (neutral), 13.6, 6.4, indicating a generally positive response. There were, however, differences in the sub groups. Of the men, 28.8 per cent expressed dissatisfaction, while only 12.4 per cent of the women felt the same way. Fully 53.6 per cent of our careers bound students felt neutral about their readings.

Do students read enough these days? In Question 21 we asked a loaded question: "We read too much in our secondary English courses: the teachers should have given us less reading." The responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree were 2.9, 8.8, 19.7, 49.7, and 16.7 per cent, indicating that our incoming students felt they should have read more. There were differences between men and women and university and careers students. Fully 70 per cent of the men disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, while 63.3 per cent of the women felt the same way. 72.8 per cent of the university bound students felt they should have read more, while only 40.4 per cent of the careers students felt the same. The new secondary curriculum has a strong social bias, and we wondered how students respond to that. In Question 20 students were asked to comment on "Reading literature doesn't make me a better person." From strongly agree to strongly disagree the responses were 7.8, 10.3, 30.5, 33.9, 16.2 per cent, indicating that most students believe literature is linked with personal development. But in terms of those who agreed or strongly agreed with this negative statement, we find 25.5 per cent of the men and 12.4 per cent of the women.

We also asked students to rank reading as one of five possible activities in Question 26. Of the men, 19.9 per cent ranked it first or second, while 33.8 per cent of the women placed it in the same categories. Fully 34.4 per cent of the men ranked reading last as opposed to 12.5 per cent of the women.

c. The student and the teacher in the secondary classroom

When we asked Question 13 - "My teacher helped me understand the materials in the Resource Book and assemble materials for the written finals" - we thought we would find out how active the teacher is in the new English Language Arts classroom. One axiom of the new curriculum is that teachers are not to deprive their students of their learning. But something entirely different appears to come through here: some students have closer relationships with their teacher than others. The overall results show that most teachers helped students get ready for the final, written exam, but the women think they were helped more than the men: 43.2 per cent of the men agreed or strongly agreed with this statement as compared to 52.5 per cent of the women. At the other end of the spectrum the numbers were 19.9 and 11.5 per cent, respectively.

The responses to Questions 25 and 19 seem to support this hypothesis. Question 25 (Last year our teacher talked with the class before deciding what we would read) drew responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree of 6.8, 23.1, 16.7, 31.0, and 22.1, but when we look at the two negative categories together and group the responses according to sex we find 59.9 per cent of the men and 47.2 per cent of the women. In Question 19 (When I wrote I got better feedback from my classmates than from my teacher) 29.9 per cent of the men disagreed or strongly disagreed while 38.3 per cent of the women felt the same.

When we take this together with our earlier discussion of collaboration in the secondary classroom, it seems that women have better relationships with their colleagues **and** with their teacher. As well, it appears that they respond to the secondary curriculum more positively than their male colleagues. In the light of all this, it is not surprising that fewer women find themselves in Effective Reading and Writing.

3. Students rate their strengths and weaknesses

In Questions 7, 8, and 9 we asked students to rank themselves in terms of the six criteria used on last year's secondary leaving exam. In Question 7 we listed preparation, ideas, quality of language, mechanical precision, and revision and proofreading across the page and asked students which of the five gave them the most difficulty. In Question 8 we listed the same items and asked which gave the least difficulty.

a. Ideas

Paradoxically ideas headed the list in both questions. In general 28 per cent felt ideas gave them the most difficulty, but 41.8 per cent felt it gave them the least. There appear to be two sorts of students here, those who think they have ideas and those who do not. Men, surprisingly, think they have an easier time here than women. 30.3 per cent of the women say they have trouble, as opposed to 25.5 per cent of the men. Fully 46.6 per cent of the men found ideas the least difficult as opposed to 38.3 per cent of the women.

b. Mechanical precision

Our students identify mechanical precision as a problem area: 27 per cent say it is the most difficult and again there is a difference between men and women: 33.3 per cent of the men find this hard as compared to 22.3 per cent of the women. One surprising note is that only 19.5 per cent of our careers students find this the most difficult area, but they most often find themselves in our remedial classes. Perhaps this is an area one finds a problem if one has been sensitized to the problem. Interestingly, mechanical precision is the criterion in Question 8 that fewest students said gave them the least difficulty.

c. Preparation

Preparation is the process of taking notes, freewriting, underlining, and drafting that preceded the two final written exams last year. In general, 22.6 per cent of our sample found this most difficult. In the criteria for next year's English Language Arts leaving exam, Preparation will be combined with Revision and Proofreading, the area receiving the lowest ranking on Question 7(most difficulty) and the second highest ranking on Question 8 (least difficulty). Women find preparation more difficult than men (perhaps because they collaborate more intensely), while men find revision and proofreading harder than women. The results of Question 15(I think that when you write well you do not have to do much revision) can be considered here. The general results from strongly agree to strongly disagree are much what one would expect from a curriculum that stresses revision: 3.4,18.2, 15.7 (neutral), 49.2, 12.3, but there are interesting differences between men and women: only 8.9 per cent of the women are neutral on this topic, while 24.4 per cent of the men place themselves there. This difference pushes out into the positive and negative ends of the scale. 18.8 per cent of the men agree or strongly agree as opposed to 24 per cent of the women. At the other end 56.6 per cent of the men disagree or strongly disagree as opposed 65 per cent of the women.

d. Quality of language

Our students think that Quality of language is not a major problem. It is ranked the fourth most difficult and the third least difficult, but in neither case is it mentioned by more than 17.8 per cent of the students. That 17.8 rating refers to the percentage of our allophone population who find this most difficult.

e. Writing assignments in general

Question 18 (The writing assignments were easy) attracted responses that approximate a normal curve: 6.8, 25.6, 38.4, 22.6, and 3.4, but here again there are intersting differences between men and women. 36.6 per cent of the men disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement as opposed 17.8 per cent of the women. 32.2 per cent of the men were neutral on this topic, as opposed to 42.2 per cent of the women.

4. Possibilities for future research

a. Who are our students?

There appear to be several factors at work in the way our students respond to language courses. A larger sample, with more definition to the questions and more sophisticated data processing, might get at them. Clearly there are important differences in learning styles between men and women and university and careers students in our population. We pride ourselves in having a student centered curriculum, so we should expect that these questions will be addressed.

b. How do our students see us

We are well aware of the controversy teacher evaluation raises in the Cegep context, but we feel that a survey of graduating students at a college as to how they responded to the particular curriculum offered there would be valuable. Broad curriculum surveys of this kind are easy for most colleges and within the mandate of the department and the DSP as spelled out in the collective agreement. Many of the questions that should be asked are obvious: Do students feel there was a sufficient emphasis on writing, reading, and research skills in their courses? Do students want more access to courses with Canadian content? Does the college offer enough courses with a multicultural emphasis? Did the courses you took interest you? Such surveys, by reflecting student experience of a curriculum as a whole, would help individual departments and colleges think about their curricula and evolve.

Chapter VI. Cognition, Cognitive Abilities, Composition, Curriculum, and the Classroom

What are the foundations that sustain the new English Language Arts curriculum our students have passed through? How did this new model of language learning develop? A complete answer can not be given in a project as wide-ranging as ours, but we can give an overview of what has happened. In the early 1960s educators, responding to the developmental psychology of Jean Piaget and the linguistic theories of Noam Chomsky, began to rethink the classroom teaching of language. Could the insights into how we learn from Piaget and the insights into how language works from Chomsky be combined into a new pedagogy? Could hypotheses be generated from their thinking and tested in the classroom? The answer was yes.

First we will look at Piaget and Chomsky and their discoveries, then we will highlight some of the landmarks in the development of this 'new' (it's at least 25 years old) approach to language. Next we will look at the new class room, and finally we will consider the impact of this approach at all levels of education.

1. First some background

a. Jean Piaget (1896-1980)

Jean Piaget is the most important developmental psychologist of the 20th century. His theory, developed from a close observation of children, addresses cognition - the mental process through which knowledge is acquired. He provides a list of sequential cognitive abilities that lead the infant to the full panoply of adult skills somewhere between the ages of 12 and 15. In terms of the new approaches to curriculum the English Language Arts program represents, Piaget's discoveries about the process of cognition are more imporant than particular cognitive abilities.

Piaget posits two basic, innate behaviours, sucking and an urge to adapt oneself to the environment. From these everything else grows. As children adapt generalized sucking to an efficient behaviour, they are said to show **accommodation**. It is the first learning experience, their first contact with the environment. As well, children develop through assimilation. Here they use their contacts with the environment to develop new behaviours and understandings.

These are further refined by accommodation and become what Piaget calls schemes, habitual ways of perceiving and dealing with the world around one. Here are the sequential steps of Piaget's description of the development of cognitive abilities:

Stage	Approximate age	Some major characteristics
Sensorimotor	0-2 years	Motoric intelligence World of the here and now No language, no thought in early stages No notion of objective reality
Preoperational	2-7 years	Egocentric thought Reason dominated by perception Intuitive rather than logical solutions Inability to conserve
Preconceptual	2-4 years	
Intuitive	4-7 years	
Concrete Operations	7-11 or 12 years	Ability to conserve Logic of classes and relations Understanding of number Thinking bound to concrete Development of reversibility in thought.
Formal Operations	11 or 12 to 14 or 15 years	Complete generality of thought Propositional thinking Ability to deal with the hypothetical Development of strong idealism

For us, as language teachers, Piaget gives us two ideas we are going to encounter again: that cognition happens when the individual encounters the environment and that growth in cognitive abilities is a continuous process.

b. Noam Chomsky

Grammar is a loaded word, and Noam Chomsky loaded it. Chomsky holds that our knowledge of grammar is intuitive. We learn it as we learn to speak. Every meaningful utterance, from the earliest stages of learning, aims at the basic element of grammar, the sentence.

Before Chomsky, descriptive grammarians had worked from the particular to the general, from the smallest units (morphemes and phonemes) to the rules which govern how larger groupings of words are combined into sentences, the rules of syntax. Do people actively employ the rules of this older grammar when they speak or write? Of course they don't.

Chomsky holds that every utterance starts in the mind as a 'kernal sentence' and that it is 'transformed,' or modified, into its final form. The kernal sentence is said to reflect the 'deep structure' of language, the meaning that motivates the writer or speaker. The 'surface structure' is the term applied to a traditional, descriptive grammarian's account of how that sentence appears.

So why do students write so poorly? The answer lies partly in the differences between written and spoken communication. There are different 'codes' that govern the two. When we see run-on sentences, fragments, misplaced modifiers, and the rest, we are looking at problems of 'code-switching.'

Chomsky is really focusing on the acquisition of one of the most important of cognitive skills, language, and his insights have several corrolaries that are apparent in modern pedagogy. Should students be taught grammar in a context that does not involve expression? No, they shouldn't. If the teacher knows the older descriptive grammar, should that be taught to students? No, again (and the Scholastic Aptitude Test and Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey, be damned.) Do students know something about the language? Chomsky feels their intuitive knowledge has value beyond what the student can tell us in an analysis of writing. Students know more about language than they can express.

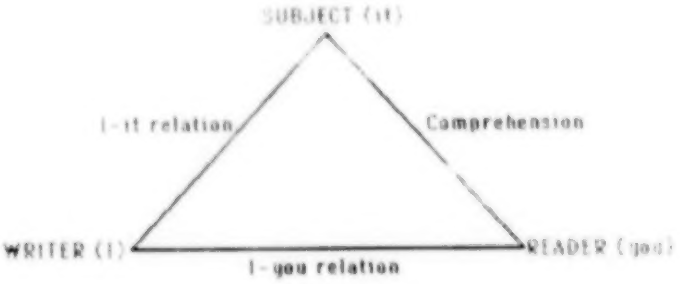
2. The educators arrive

Perhaps knowledge about how we learn, the stages through which we pass in learning, and - ultimately - what we learn could be applied to the growing complexity of our responses to literature and to the teaching of writing itself. The thought of Piaget and Chomsky is obvious enough now (it is the accepted explanation) more than 30 years after it first appeared, but to key theorists like James Moffett and James Britton -both of whom are important theorists for the English Language Arts Program in Quebec's secondary schools - it opened possible windows into the writing process. Moffett concerns himself primarily with the environment within which communication takes place, that tensioned triangle involving the writer or speaker, the subject, and the audience, while Britton focuses on observing writers at work, just as Piaget focused on watching children learn.

a. James Moffett

Picking up from Piaget, James Moffett sees language learning as an ongoing process. From Chomsky he takes the idea that language is not learned in 'particles' but rather holistically and intuitively. The real focus of our work as teachers is the student who is located somewhere on a widening piral of knowledge about language which starts at the egocentric and develops to the theoretical and abstract.

At the heart of the process is Moffett's model of the communication triangle:



Language is a symbol system that students learn to manipulate not analyze. What governs any text is how the writer sees the subject and the audience. These concerns will come up again when we consider Moffett's impact on the new English Language Arts Curriculum in Québec.

Traditional rhetoric is rearranged to fit the steps of cognitive growth, the spiral of abilities, outlined by Piaget:

What is happening?	Drama	Recording experience
What happened?	Narrative	Reporting experience
What happens?	Exposition	Generalizing about
	experience	
What may happen?	Argumentation	Theorizing about
experience		

Apart from first demands for food and affection, children's earliest uses of language in the 'preoperational' stage are to explain the world to themselves. This is the 'egocentric thought' of Piaget (2-7 years) and the 'what is happening' of Moffett. At this point the speaker and the audience are not distinguished. As the spiral widens we develop the ability to conserve (7-11 or 12 years, the period of 'concrete operations') and this is shown in writing which answers the question what happened - Moffett's term for the narrative form. As learners move on through this period they begin to grasp what happens in a general sense, that stories have a theme, that actions have consequences, that general 'truths' can be extracted from experience, and that these can be stated. This third ability continues to develop into the final stage of development, 'formal operations.' In this last phase, stretching from 11 to 15 years, according to Piaget, we develop 'complete generality of thought, propositional thinking, an ability to deal with the hypothetical,' and a 'strong idealism.' Here Moffett says that we are answering the question 'what may happen,' that this leads to the theorizing about experience in an abstract way and the argumentation that marks writers producing for the widest audience. Moffett says we move outward 'from self to world, from a point to an area, from a private world of egocentric chatter to a public world of discourse.' Every student is somewhere on this spiral of discourse and it is the aim of education to move outward from where the student is. In short, this is a student centered curriculum.

In the classroom Moffett takes another aspect of Piaget's work: that learning takes place when an individual encounters the environment. Is the traditional classroom a real environment? Should students be forced to endure a teacher who acts **in loco parentis**, as an authority, as a 'wielder of marks?' Is this real? Moffett says it is not. Teachers have already passed through the stages the students are now mastering, and the students know themselves better than the teachers know them. Writing has to be for a real audience, and the teacher should adapt his assignments to that. But most important, the teacher should engage the students in the class so that they help one another, so that they, in part, provide an audience. In this way, through collaboration, students own their learning. As well, collaboration aids the secondary concern of education with social development.

b. James Britton and the process of composition

If the development of cognitive abilities, in general, can be observed, what do we see when we watch writers at work on the composition process, a particular domain? How do they solve the problems of composition? What sorts of **accommodation** transform the clutter of thoughts in the brain into efficient communication. How is writing a part of **assimilation**, the development of new understandings of and behaviours toward the environment. What sorts of **schemes** do writers habitually employ? The steps in the composition process are no suprise: **prewriting, writing,** and **revision**.

Prewriting is where one begins 'explaining the matter to oneself.' It is this crucial area that is least understood by older, more linear curricula. Here students were often encouraged to produce numbered outlines. Useless say the modernists: professionals don't think that way and our ideas do not evolve like this.

When we use journals, brainstorming, and freewriting we are using prewriting techniques employed by real writers to explain the matter to themselves. All this may remind us of the 'egocentric chatter' of Moffett and Piaget, but we should remember that successful strategies are not abandoned, and that the schemes that work go on being used. We build on what we have mastered as we moved outward on the spiral. Prewriting is also important because it is here, as the matter is explained, that a commitment to one's ideas is made. Commitment is important in this socially sensitive approach.

Although no fixed time is attached to prewriting in the real world - a 'few moments to many years,' says one writer (Lindemann, 25) - prewriting seeds the mind so that the moment of insight that often makes great writing can occur. Although most writers are isolated individuals, a good deal of collaborative time in the classroom is essentially spent on what is prewriting. Students explain the matter to their colleagues (and to themselves).

Those of us who saw last year's Secondary Five Leaving Exam remember the ubiquitous instruction 'take notes,' which governed the students encounter with the texts and their colleagues. These notes figured in the final mark.

Writing is obviously the meat in the sandwich, but how to distinguish it from the prewriting on top and the revision on the bottom? Clearly we can change our plans in mid process, and clearly we do some revision almost as soon as the words are generated. Writing is also the most difficult of the three parts of composition to describe, even to oneself. Just what is going on in one's mind when the pen or pencil touches the paper or the fingers engage the keyboard? Beginning is no easy matter. Obsessive desk cleaning, pencil sharpening, questions to the teacher about writing in pen or pencil are all indications of the difficulty. Those of us who write outside the classroom can easily expand this list of ritual behaviour. Students need encouragement here more than anywhere else.

Once writing is underway we appear to resent interruption. While students talk with classmates and we discuss matters with colleagues before we begin, once the work is in progress it is ours and we do not want it judged until it is finished. Personal commitment to the text is at its highest.

But writing is never smooth, as observations of writers tell us. Perhaps we can not keep all we want to say in our short term memory, perhaps we can not find the words, perhaps we lose our grip on what it is we wanted to say, on our explanation. We can see the physical manifestations of these problems - looking off into the distance, ticks of all sorts, even verbal self-questioning. Whatever, there is little role for the teacher at this crucial moment.

Revision is where the ways part. Professionals often take pleasure in it; students almost never do. Perhaps we have to distinguish here between the correction of mechanical errors and a systematic rethinking of the text. Students are used to the first: they receive a list of grammatical problems (and we should remember Chomsky when we make our students do this) and they fix them. Then they rewrite it all neatly. This, they see as punishment. Real revision is rewarding but psychologically stressful, particularly for students who are committed to what they are saying. In revision they must stand outside their work, essentially ceasing to be themselves and becoming the reader (see Moffett's triangle).

How can students revise and still own their work if they have to become somebody else to do that? The answer is in our awareness of the problem. Students need praise. If even the best students find a first-class, graded paper somehow a failure because of the comments they receive, we have failed and not they. Can feedback from fellow students help heal or avoid the wounds? Can sensitive comment that pays attention both to the external and mechanical and to the internal help students to find themselves in revision? Pedagogues like Britton hope so.

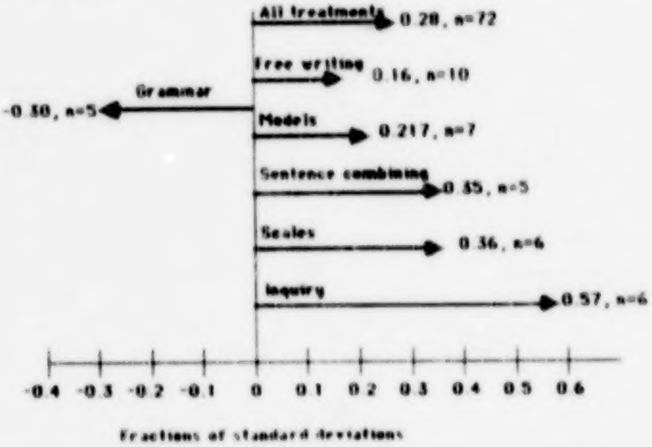
3. Some recent research on teaching writing

This section is a summary of a summary: George Hillocks, Jr.'s, 'Synthesis of Research on Teaching Writing' from the May, 1987, issue of **Educational Leadership**.

a. Hillocks's 'Synthesis'

In his article Hillocks divided his attention between recent insights into the ability of certain teaching techniques to enhance (or in some cases reduce) the quality of student writing and research into the composing process.

Hillocks, who is a Professor in both the Department of English and the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, reviewed several hundred studies looking for those with a superior design and adequate controls. He settled on 60 studies involving 72 experimental treatments. These studies dealt with the emphases in classroom instruction most commonly found: grammar (the definition of parts of speech, the active parsing of sentences), models, sentence combining, scales (the development and use of criteria for judging and revising compositions), inquiry (the use of simulation games to generate 'real life' classroom activity and subsequent composition), and free writing. His analysis expresses the change in quality of student writing in fractions of standard deviation when these emphases are applied. The graph below illustrates his results.



To understand the graph we should be aware that standard deviation is a number generated to describe the spread of marks in a distribution. If, for instance, the arthmetic mean of the marks of a particular class was 70 and the standard deviation was 7.1, then 95.4% of the marks in that class would fall within 2 standard deviation units on either side of the mean. That is, they would fall between 84.2 per cent and 55.8 per cent. In a normal distribution, 68.3 pr cent of a population falls within 1 standard deviation unit on either side of the arithmetic mean.

Grammar is dismissed as an effective focus: 'the study of grammar does not contribute to the growth in the quality of student writing (75).' The best that can be said is that one four-year, 'carefully designed' study in New Zealand showed no measurable difference in three groups of students, one focusing on traditional grammar, another on transformational grammar, and a third on no grammar. The five studies, taken together, show a classroom focus on traditional grammar damages student writing.

Free writing is the least effective of the techniques currently in vogue. In free writing students write about whatever interests them in the matter at hand. There are no inhibitions. That production is combined with peer group activity, both in terms of the generation of ideas (brainstorming and clustering) and feedback. The use of models and other criteria is discouraged. Finally at the end some teacher feedback is forthcoming. Hillocks agrees that teachers who use this technique have a better understanding of composition but concludes that 'free writing [alone] and the attendant process orientation are inadequate strategies (80).'

Models, the imitation of examples of the standard types of prose, resulted in a 'small' gain of 0.217 standard deviations. This is 'surprising,' according to Hillocks because much everyday writing makes use of 'identifiable patterns or forms.' Perhaps the reason is that too much instruction takes as its focus the 'declarative knowledge' of models, the identification and naming its parts and features.

This is another term for the 'particle' knowledge of Moffett. More emphasis on performance might help.

Sentence combining showed marked improvement in the quality of student writing. At 0.35 standard deviations it is more than twice as effective as free writing. Exercises of this type present students with groups of two or more sentences and require them to make a single sentence according to some structure stipulated in the material. Since the mid 70s the instructions for these assignments have **excluded** 'grammatical terminology.' In general, syntactic complexity increases with age, but theorists believe such work gives students a control over syntax (and we remember Moffett's remarks that language is something student's should 'manipulate') that they can apply to their writing.

Scales are sets of criteria for judging and revision compositions. Here students are guided by the teacher in the evaluation of introductory compositions. Where works are not top-rated (usually on a continuum of 0-3) students receive prompts which help them revise the work. Students then apply their knowledge to the works of their colleagues and of themselves. Theorists believe the 0.36 improvement shows the acquisition of 'discourse knowledge,' that knowledge that reflects the how of composition.

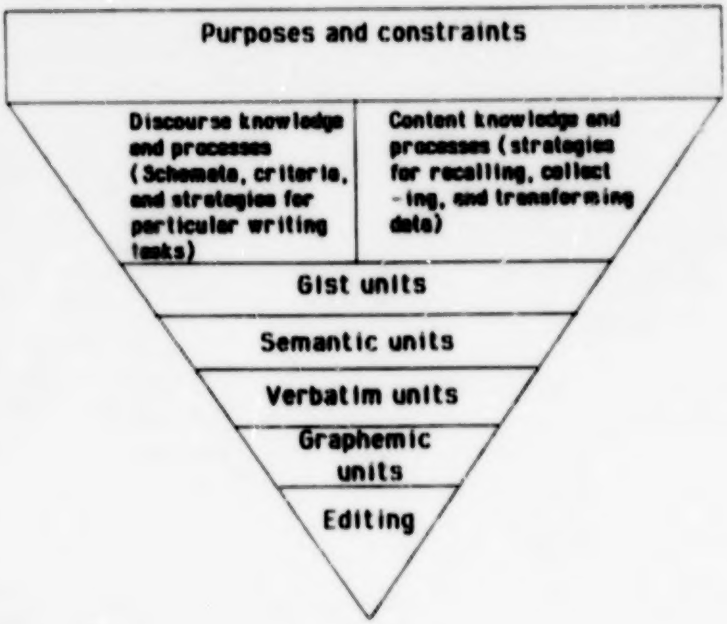
Inquiry is the classroom technique which shows the greatest gain by far at 0.57. Here students use 'sets of data in a structured fashion to help (them) learn strategies for using the data in their writing' (78-80). Essentially we are talking about carefully structured simulation games which present the students with the possibility of seeing the data (in a valid way) from more than one perspective. Typically students are assigned a perspective. Consider prison reform: you might be made a guard or you might be a prisoner. You are required to defend that point of view against other perceptions which are almost equally valid. The argumentative oral and written tasks are at the highest level of discourse (see Piaget and Moffett), but equally as important, according to the researchers, in these studies, is that students learn how to transform raw data into an opinion.

Although **Free Writing**, **Models**, and **Scales** are used in the ELA secondary curriculum, **Sentence Combining** and **Inquiry** are not.

b. New insights into the composing process

As we said earlier, the actual process of composition is elusive and hard to pin down. Hillocks considers the research of J. R. Hayes and I.S. Flower as well as the work of M. Scardalmalia and C. Bereiter. Hillocks presents this research as a graph with the process moving in descending steps down to editing at the point of the inverted pyramid.

As we look at this triangle we should remember that the mental process is not always downwards, although it is usually so. The writer can move backward at every step. As we all know, the writing process sometimes leads to discoveries about content that dictate the restructuring of a composition. Theorists describe the process as recursive.


Purposes and constraints
Discourse knowledge and processes (Schemata, criteria, and strategies for particular writing tasks)
Content knowledge and processes (strategies for recalling, collect-ing, and transforming data)
Gist units
Semantic units
Verbatim units
Graphemic units
Editing

Purposes and constraints focus the writer on the task and help identify an audience or audiences. Decisions made here are subject, however, to amendment at what Bereiter calls the **content processor** where **discourse knowledge** - knowledge about how to say things - is brought together with **content knowledge** - an understanding, drawn from the raw data and writer's reactions to it, of what is to be said.

A **Gist unit** is 'a generally circumscribed area of content that has not been laid out in any detail but for which the writer probably has notions of form or purpose' (Hillocks, 73). Essentially this is a chunk of the final composition. If one where a sculpting the human form, it would be the idea of the arm before the chisel struck that part of the stone.

Semantic, verbatim and **graphemic units** are much more closely linked. First the writer solves the problem of sentence shape (Does this sentence show cause and effect? Is this sentence comparing?), then finds the right words, and finally writes the sentence out.

Editing speaks for itself.

4. A brief summary

Up to this point we have seen how the broad insights of Piaget into developmental psychology and the more specific insights of Chomsky about language learning were adapted into the spiral curriculum of Moffett. As well, we have seen how theorists like Britton and others have adopted the close observation of Piaget and Chomsky into research leading to an explanation of that most shadowy of processes, composition. In addition, we have reported on research into the effectiveness of various classroom techniques in the teaching of writing. Before we turn our attention to what happens in the classroom where this spiral curriculum has been adopted, we have to consider the importance of feelings, the real fuel that fires the new in-class experience.

5. The importance of feelings

If we remember back to the beginning of this chapter, we recall that Piaget posited as an instinct the urge to adapt onself to the environment. Underneath that urge lurks the question of feelings in all post sensorimotor adaptation, say the new theorists. And we do not have to look far in John Dixon's, **Growth through English**, a report on the influential Dartmouth Seminar of 1966, to see this is so. In a chapter reporting on the discussion of the premise that 'English has **no** content' - the whole discussion aimed at finding what knowledge is gained from the study of English - the overriding importance of individuals understanding their own feelings emerged.

- 'Some ways of knowing are intensely personal; where they are the process of learning may be painfully slow' (73).
- 'In ordinary living no choice, decision or judgement is made without consideration of what we feel as well as what we know' (74).
- Some disciplines [like history and geography, and sometimes English in the study of period, prosody, and genre] build up 'cognitive frames of reference . . . divorced and isolated from the influence of our desires and feelings about the world.' (74)

Dixon and his successors argue that it is 'not the cognitive frame of reference but the structure of feelings that matters most' (74). Ultimately these perceptions move us to 'a model of English based on **experience** and language in **operation** .... We can usefully look on 'bodies of knowledge as frames of reference for **actions** -for judgements, choices and decisions.' (80)

If you think that feelings have a role to play in an attack on any direct historical explication of a work and its context, on the lecture method, on the study of prosody and an overemphasis on literary terminology, you are right. And we shall see this as we look at the new curriculum in the classroom.

6. The new classroom

The most succinct statement about the new classroom is found in the policy statement of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Commission on Composition, issued in 1974 and revised in 1984. The document first states the goal of composition study:

> Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing, writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world.

With that out of the way it turns to 'The Means of Writing Instruction' in Section V:

> Students learn to write by writing. Guidance in the writing process and discussion of the students' own work should be the central means of writing instruction. Students should be encouraged to comment on each other's writing, as well as receiving frequent, prompt, individualized attention from the teacher. Reading what others have written, speaking about one's responses to their writing, and listening to the responses of others are important activities in the writing classroom. Textbooks and other instructional resources should be of secondary importance.
> The evaluation of students' progress in writing should begin with the students' own written work. Writing ability cannot be adequately assessed by tests and other formal evaluation alone. Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their writing ability in work aimed at various purposes. Students should also be encouraged to develop the critical ability to evaluate their own work, so that they can become effective, independent writers in the world beyond school.

We quoted this passage in its entirety because every word here counts, both explicitly and implicitly.

A more evocative treatment of the new classroom is found in Dixon's description in **Growth through English**:

> When we enter many of the best classrooms today we may well not see the desks laid our in their formal rows: they may stacked well to the back while the class use the space for drama, or they may be grouped for display building or small discussions, or just for quiet reading.

> It is not enough to be able to face the blackboard: the class or group may be gathered round a thematic display of photographs or a tape recorder, may be discussing a filmstrip or watching a television screen. At some times of the day groups of pupils will be scattered around the room engaged in all these different activities: it has become an 'open room' or 'workshop' (97).

a. Activities in the collaborative classroom

What happens in a typical class in the new curriculum? First, there is a stimulus for writing: perhaps a story, poem, or play; perhaps a description of real life from a newspaper, a magazine, some photographs, or a tv show; or perhaps some imagined situation or problem loaded with choices and possibilities. If the stimulus is literary, students might have read it outside of class, or the teacher or the students read it in class, or some combination of the above.

Following the presentation there may be an initial class discussion of the feelings of the students, or perhaps the teacher moves directly to a fifteen minute (or longer) freewrite. In freewriting, the 'only requirement is that you never stop.' (Elbow and Macrorie,3) The technique is designed to put students in touch with their feelings and develop content knowledge. Now students work in groups or with their neighbours, passing the freewrite for comment and discussion. The emphasis here, is on the positive, on good things that can be expanded and improved.

> Perhaps the teacher asks members of the class to share what they have found in their reading of someone else's text. The teacher nudges and teases students towards a fuller realization of what those students want to say, but most important the teacher conveys to each student 'that one has after all things of value to say, experiences to share, with teachers and others in the group.' (Dixon 36)

In the next class each student might choose a form for an expository (Moffett calls this transactional) or creative written response. Here **content knowledge** is brought together with **discourse knowledge** and **purposes and constraints** are established.

There would be more writing, more group work, more sharing, and more teacher response. Perhaps another class leads to a more finished product; perhaps that takes longer. We should remember that students took eight class periods preparing the creative and transactional responses that the two day high school leaving examination required last spring.

7. Reflections and reservations

a. Evaluation

If we have an abilities-based, student-centered curriculum. How do we evaluate the student's progress? If we are limited to evaluating the student's writing, how do we identify the acquisition of cognitive skills in the student's text? Let's look again at Moffett's four part model for the sequential acquisition of discourse skills.

What is happening?	Drama	Recording experience
What happened?	Narrative	Reporting experience
What happens?	Exposition	Generalizing about experience
What may happen? experience	Argumentation	Theorizing about

Our students should be capable of handling all four of the levels by the time they reach CEGEP, but when it comes time to evaluate achievement and we are given a sample of writing how do we proceed? Can we get any help from Hillocks's summary of research into the writing process?

Clearly we can not mark much at the bottom of the triangle(Gist> Semantic> Verbatim> Graphemic) where thought is transformed into writing. Perhaps we can assign some value to editing and revision, perhaps we can see if the student understood the purposes and constraints of the composition, perhaps we can see if the student understands and demonstrates the discourse knowledge required, and perhaps we can see if the student has shown content knowledge in the way that stimulus material is worked into the final composition. We might also consider whether the work shows that the student really is engaged at an affective (feelings) level. Perhaps we assign a portion of the mark to mechanical precision.

The meaning of particular criteria are the result of meetings at which the markers 'negotiate con(s)ensus' (MEQ, *ELA Marking Guide*, June 1990, 3). Papers are then sorted and marks assigned. Sometimes the marks are reliable (that is different markers are in close agreement as to the relative merits of individual papers), and sometimes they are not, as was the case with last year's leaving exam.

But what do these marks tell us? What do we know about the real level of cognitive achievement? Is this year's crop better or worse than their colleagues of years past? What are their strengths and what are their weaknesses? What does a pass mean given that the process of negotiating consensus is ongoing?

This puts the load on the teacher. Many of our colleagues have the impression that student 'fluency' in writing has improved, but the new marking method really hinders any longitudinal study unless the students' papers are preserved for future study. If we are talking about 'formation fondamentale,' where are we in the process?

b. Reading and reading comprehension

Let's consider one area of contention in 'formation fondamentale,' reading comprehension. Michel Therrien, president of AQPF, the group linking French mother tongue teachers in Québec, says that this is the area of concern:

some 40 per cent of students taking the leaving exam failed this part of the quiz.

In the English leaving examination, which reflects the new curricular principles in a purer way than the French exam did, reading comprehension was tested implicitly. In their poetic writing to pass the criterion of **ideas** a student's work was required to demonstrate some 'minimal link with an idea in the material of the Resource Book'(Marking Guide, Appendix A). We note that this is an idea, **one** idea. In their transactional (expository) writing they were required to show 'at least one carefully considered reference to material in the Resource Booklet and the materials studied during the year' (Appendix B).

The English leaving exam did not test reading comprehension directly because that is what Moffett calls 'particle' knowledge. Are student reading skills up to standard? In our survey of incoming students last fall we asked them to comment on the statement: 'We read too much in our secondary English courses: the teachers should have given us less reading.' Some 11.7 per cent of our students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 66.4 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only 19.7 per cent were neutral.

We are all aware of the fractious debates about the 'proper' content of English studies, and it is clear now that the new curriculum with its emphasis on the writing process and feelings has played no small part. When we remember the discussion at Dartmouth debating the proposition that 'English has no content' in 1966, we see the swelling crest of this troubling wave in the curricular sea. Our student survey of last fall invites us to ask the question in slightly altered form: 'Do English studies have enough content; do our students read enough?'

c. The collaborative classroom and the lecture

Linked with this is the question of the collaborative classroom and the survival of the lecture at the college level. If we remember back to the beginning of this chapter we will recall that Piaget said that cognition happens when the individual encounters the environment. In English studies, at the secondary level and increasingly at CEGEP, that environment is the collaborative classroom. This environment was designed to replicate in the school the supportive world in which early cognition takes place. It is a strongly emotive and social world, but is it really appropriate at our level? Consider again the activities that take place there and the sorts of abilities that are developed. How much material can be covered in such an environment? With all the emphasis on freewriting and feelings are we not trapping our students at the lowest level of the curricular spiral and leaving little place for the development of independent thought? Does the collaborative classroom give the student enough to think about, or does it merely organize the students' feelings about what little is covered? Let's remember again Dixon's remark that it is 'not the cognitive frame of reference but the structure of feelings that matters most.' As Jim Reither of St. Thomas University put it at a seminar on organizing the collaborative classroom at Dawson, the collaborative classroom produces 'knowledge that is an inch wide and a mile deep' and not the other way around. Is there no middle ground?

Apparently not. A consultant with a Montreal school board condemned the idea of introducing a unit on the sonnet with a lecture on historical background and on the relation of form to content in these poems before allowing group work on particular poems in subsequent sessions. This 'denies students the ownership of their learning: we're not there to pour facts into them.' We are not there to provide a cognitive frame of reference: all we should do is 'coach' their discussions and writing.

d. Some important things are not cognitive abilities

But is the lecture really dead at the college level? The collaborative classroom at the primary and secondary levels was designed to facilitate the acquisition of cognitive abilities, a process which is largely complete in our students. We have to distinguish cognitive abilities from 'the cognitive frame of reference' which was not as important as 'the structure of feelings' in earlier education. A cognitive frame of reference is the internalized understanding of a discipline that a student takes away from the school or college after prolonged study. A doctor may have feelings about socialized medicine or the plight of his patients or even the problems of the unemployed, but what governs internal medicine is a cognitive frame of reference; the doctor's cognitive abilities help him structure his feelings about the former and organize and think about the latter.

e. Feelings and curriculum

Perhaps we are going on too long about feelings, but the attack on what many call the traditional curriculum is tied in here. Consider Wayne C. Booth's remark to the Dartmouth Seminar on what sort of literature students should read: 'no pupil should ever be given an assignment which does not, at the time in the class, yield him enough fruit in his own terms, so that he can feel it was worth doing' (Dixon, 78).

When colleagues tell us students will never respond to that (that, in most cases, being something which dates before the invention of the short story), they mean that they can not see how our students could possibly have feelings about the work in question. As well, approaches to literature like the historical and the generic, which stress the development of a cognitive frame of reference, are condemned on the same grounds.

In our secondary schools 'textbooks . . .(are) of secondary importance' as we remember from the policy statement of the National Council of Teachers of English, but is that true at the college and university level and in the workplace? Here the cognitive frame of reference must be developed quickly. Calculus, anatomy, computer programming, biology, history, and other disciplines depend on such frames. The student's desire to learn is assumed. In the workplace employees are expected to master procedures and manuals, follow instructions, and write reports to order. Feelings take second place. Where a volume of information is to be passed, passing it directly is efficient. At the very least, the choice in methods depends on the goal and the level of the course. If the focus is on cognitive abilities and the structure of feelings, then the collaborative technique seems appropriate; if the goal is a cognitive frame of reference and independent thought, a direct technique may be more efficient.

This is not to say the collaborative method has no place in post secondary education or in the workplace. We also note that quality circles in the workplace are essentially collaborative in nature and have been shown to have effect.

But there is a danger in post secondary education, and perhaps even at the earlier level, in an emphasis on feelings. Do students always have feelings about the subject matter? Do some students get up like Coleridge and come to class in a dejected frame of mind where they 'see, not feel' how beautiful things are. If teachers demand feelings, do they get them? Of course they do. 'Give the teachers what they want' has always been the first rule of education. But as teachers we should remember that feelings are at the beginning of Moffett's spiral of language abilities.

8. Summary and conclusion

So what have we seen in this chapter? The insights of psychologists like Piaget and linguists like Chomsky inspired a rethinking of primary and secondary curriculum along lines largely outlined by educational theorists like Moffett and Britton. The 'new' curriculum sees written and oral expression as cognitive abilities and restructures the classroom as an environment within which that learning may best take place. Teachers at this level are generally happy with the results they have achieved.

At the primary and secondary level the 'magisterial' lecture has been replaced by the teacher as coach in a collaborative classroom setting. The underlying concern of language studies with social development since the days of Matthew Arnold plays an important part in the deliberations of students in the new classroom. The feelings of students about the material covered are of primary importance. At this level, the actual literature taught is less important than its ability to evoke immediate affective response in the students. At the same time these new classroom techniques appear to have reduced the amount of material the students actually read.

Do English studies have a cognitive frame of reference? Does any understanding of the significance of our culture emerge from all these years of effort? Are we just teaching our students to be young people who can write and speak well? If we have something to say, can't we say it in a lecture at this level? Or should we arrange a sharing experience in the classroom where the students discover it themselves and are not denied their own learning? Should we employ collaborative techniques in remedial courses, where strengthening cognitive abilities is the goal? Should we be aware that not all abilities are cognitive abilities?

As we confront these questions - and they are not going to be resolved by a study like this - it is wise to keep things in perspective. Although many of us are not aware of it, we have been influenced by these changes at the primary and secondary level, and those changes are playing no small part in the self searching that dominates the discussion on English CEGEP curriculum today.

Chapter VII. University and the Workplace

What expectations do future employers and advanced-level teachers have for our students? Our English courses complete the formal education of our careers students. They provide not only the last systematic study of literature most of the students will have but also their last formal instruction in writing. At the same time, they are a preparation for university-level demands: **skills** like researching and writing essays and communicating ideas as well as a **knowledge base** about literature and culture. Especially in the large polyvalent CEGEPs, trying to satisfy the expectations of both of these groups in our courses is one of the greatest challenges of Core English.

A. The CEGEPs' Identity

Burgess and Henchey, in their history of Quebec education, question whether the colleges have successfully carved out their identity in the interlinking of the high schools and universities.

> Few planners, in either universities or colleges, have been very successful in seeing the post-secondary experience of students as a continuum from the first year of college to the end of the university. Nor has anyone been entirely convincing in demonstrating the success of the colleges in realizing their diverse and ambitious goals (104-105).

Those goals include the focus on basic skills of thinking, reading and writing—the primary concern of the employer—and the broader cultural awareness considered essential for general education and advanced study. The employer demands highly specialized personnel certified in technical disciplines. In addition, the colleges' attempt to serve the broad community in providing non-academic or interest courses and continuing education in a variety of fields. These are significant and somewhat opposing demands on institutions which have only two years with the 1-18 year old student body to prepare them in both general education and specialized competence for university studies. Colleges, nation-wide, are often judged on criteria appropriate to other institutions:

> Where colleges prepare students for university entrance or for advanced standing in university, it has commonly been the mores of the university by which the college has been judged. Where the college has prepared the students with job-entry skills, it has been the employer market that has sometimes made unwarranted assumptions about what graduates must know and do. Where colleges have provided varieties of education for personal and social development of individuals, comparisons with the work of other individuals in this educational arena have been inevitable (157).

This analysis from the national perspective in Canada's Community Colleges, is even more acute in the case of Quebec's CEGEPs. For each of the colleges is trying to prepare students in all three areas: the university, the job market, and personal development. And within the CEGEPs, it is the English departments which are trying to achieve all of these objectives within their courses.

University transfer of English courses varies from province to province. In British Columbia, universities and colleges have worked out transfer arrangements for the first two years of university-level work. In Ontario, courses in the CAATs, specializing much more in technical education, are not automatically transferable for university credit. Dennison and Gallagher describe the situation in Quebec:

> In Quebec, the university-type courses and programmes were preparatory to the newly structured undergraduate university programmes but at least equivalent in standard and rigour to course offered in universities at the undergraduate level prior to the educational reforms in the province (71).

Based on our research, this recognition of equivalence does not apply to English as a discipline, only to English as a service field providing basic skills. The one exception is in the case Heritage College in Hull, since all four of its Core courses (drawn from two-semester Introduction to British, Canadian, or American Literature) are accepted for university credit in neighbouring Ottawa, at Carleton and Ottawa Universities.

B. The Demands of the Universities

1. Admissions

Since the advent of the CEGEPs, English courses are no longer required of all students in their undergraduate years at university. Quebec's high school students are required to complete a DEC (Diplôme des études collégiales) before admission to Quebec universities, and the CEGEPs are assumed to have provided their foundational skills and general education through exposure to literature. But the colleges, especially in the Core areas, operate largely in isolation from the next level on the education continuum. For example, despite the curriculum designs drawn up by the COPEPP planners already outlined in last year's work The Development of CEGEP English Curriculum, university departments of English have had very little influence on their college colleagues. The same is true of the university faculties as a whole, although they all depend on communication skills from their students.

At the level of the Admissions Office, English Quebec universities do not all test our students' writing abilities or reading comprehension skills. (The colleges, by contrast, routinely test incoming high school students to establish the appropriate level of the first of four compulsory English courses.) Among the English universities, only Concordia and Bishop's have begun to require English tests, as of 1983 and 1985, respectively. But those institutions use the tests as only as criteria for graduation. Both use a writing sample, a 500-word argument on a topic of general interest. The papers are marked holistically. Results from the 1990 tests show that 26% of the Concordia students failed, down from 70% in 1983. At Bishop's the figures are 15-20% failures for the English speakers and 25% for the non-native English speakers. The preparation we provide (four Core English courses in the DEC) is the necessary condition for a Quebec student to gain admission to a Quebec university. Whether it is also a sufficient training to meet all the demands of the universities is less certain. Teachers at McGill can strongly recommend an effective writing course for weak students, according to Kate Williams of the Admissions Office. And last year approximately 1/3 of the first-year students took it (Moore D6).

As of September, 1992, the French Language Exam at Université de Montréal will be required of all entering students. Until now, the test has been used as a diagnostic during the students' university career; but it is to be made a requirement for admission. This is a major development in Quebec education, and it will certainly impact on French CEGEP curricula and methods. It may, in the long run, affect what is done in the English schools as well.

The test, designed by Laval University and similar to tests at University of Sherbrooke, covers 5 language abilities:

SYNTAXE: (word order, sentence construction, relationship of words)
29 questions/ 29 marks
MORPHOLOGIE: (word formation, agreement, case endings) 8 questions/ 8 marks
LEXIQUE: (word choice, meanings, appropriate vocabulary and use of expressions) 12 questions/ 12 marks

ORTHOGRAPHIE: (spelling) 10 questions/20 marks (-1 per error)

VOCABULAIRE: 11 questions/ 11 marks.

Out of the 80 points possible on this test, the average at U of M for the past two years has been 37. Of more than 5000 students who wrote last September, 41% failed the test, ie., scored lower than 34. The results vary by faculty, with failure rates ranging from a low of 13% to a high of 71%.

French universities have viewed with alarm the poor quality of French at their institutions. And their view is that unless changes are made, not only this generation, but succeeding generations of students will write poorly. One signal of this danger was the test in written French **at the grade six level** administered to University of Montreal's first-year education students in 1986. With the pass mark set at 80% (the grade six pass mark was 50%) half of the future teachers of pre-school, elementary, and remedial language work failed (Bagnall A4). Following this and similar horror stories, the university first moved to a language test as a condition of graduation and have since gone to a full-fledged admission test. Even the stronger French CEGEPs, like Bois-de-Boulogne, are performing poorly on that test, with a 20% failure rate.

In addition, all the U of M faculties now have a common policy for remedial French courses. The pass-mark for the French test has remained at 34/80 for the past two years

Students with scores of 23 or lower must take the following three courses: FRA1957G (Grammaire 1) in the Faculty of Continuing Education and FRA1952R & FRA1953R (CAFE 1 & 2) with monitors in the Faculty of Arts and Science. Students with scores between 24 and 33 are to take FRA1952R and FRA1953R with monitors in the Faculty of Arts and Science. These courses are obligatory, supplementary to the student's program, free for full-time students and taken for credit.

The introduction of this admission test will put pressure on the colleges. Several French colleges are already using a common "Correction Grid" designed by Marc Desbiens at Rosemont. This grid, currently being tested in their CAFs (Centres d'aide en français), looks as if it will dovetail well into the university test. Student work is measured at the initial and final steps of remediation in **sentences, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary**. (Students are often referred by their regular French teacher, of course.) *La Grille de correction du S.A.L.F.* in use at Bois-de-Boulogne includes those four categories and a fifth, **text**, which covers clarity, organization, transitions, documentation, and format. The booklet explaining the use of that correction grid at Bois-de-Boulogne runs to 35 pages.

2. The University English Department

From interviews conducted last year with the chairmen of the English departments, at McGill, Concordia, and Universite de Montreal, we can conclude that most CEGEP English programs do not in fact take the place of the first years of undergraduate work in the field. During the five-year transitional phase of CEGEP history, when the universities still housed the fledgling colleges, they offered standard introductory surveys of literature and composition. Indeed, it was generally the graduate students and untenured faculty of those departments that taught those courses. In the intervening years since 1974, departments at both levels have evolved. Most college departments veered away from the traditional curriculum, as did McGill and Concordia. But David Williams commented that the faculty and the students at McGill have come back to a traditional approach:

> [the students in English] wanted all those courses back like backgrounds to English literature, classical mythology and this kind of stuff, the Bible as literature and that kind of thing. And they are all back. And they are all full.

Since the college English departments do not provide the foundation in literature, the university department of English takes it on with its own graduate students and faculty:

> Our experience was that the introductory course at the CEGEP level was too disparate from one place to another. So that we didn't get 100% of our CEGEP entry kids all knowing the same thing. Some knew this some knew that, we found that by and large the emphasis seemed to be on modern or more modern literature than more ancient literature. And, as I say, they didn't all know the same

> thing. . . . . So that we felt that there was not enough uniformity in background. And secondly that there was a tendency, apparently a tendency, to avoid the older stuff. So we decided to do it ourselves so to speak (Interview).

In the case of the English department at McGill, composition courses are limited, and the department no longer teaches basic essay writing skills for the whole undergraduate student body. The broader-focus remedial and composition courses are now given in the Faculty of Education, as we will discuss below.

The CEGEP program could best prepare the students for an English degree with more systematic training in literature. But even more important than that, according to Professor Williams, would be intensive training in writing: "But in a wish list I think the first thing of course, is going to be the writing. It's very hard for us in a 3 year situation to try to tackle the writing (Interview)."

Concordia's English Department also offers the courses Introduction to English Literature I and II (surveys of the British tradition) and is instituting Introduction to Literary Study (an overview of the aims, history, and methods of the academic discipline of study of English). Like all undergraduates at Concordia, the English students are required to pass a University Writing Test before graduating. As an alternative, they are required to attain at least a C grade in English Composition, a 3 credit course given by the department and open to students from all disciplines. Currently, 33 sections of the course are planned for the fall of 1991.

3. Other University Disciplines

Concern with the quality of students' writing goes deep into the university programs. At the present, in McGill University, over 2000 students take a 3-credit course "Effective Written Communication," taught by the Education faculty. The course is required for students in Management (MBA and BComm), Social Work, Education (Curriculum and Instruction), and Engineering (Electrical and Mechanical). The course, given in some 85 sections, is funded by the university through the Faculty of Education (Paré, interview). The course is not available for credit to Arts Faculty students, however.

In Engineering, the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board demands high-level communication skills, both orally and in writing, in all accredited programs. In the McGill program, the Education course Effective Written Communication satisfies that requirement. In other jurisdictions, a variety of English courses are required. For example, writing courses specific to Engineering are set in Alberta, and first-year Literature and Composition and second and third year Oral and Written Communication in Saskatchewan (correspondence, Schuld, Cheberiak).

The Faculty of Dentistry at McGill does not require English courses in its curriculum, but the faculty are concerned with the quality of the students' writing. Sample tests at the fourth-year level, for example, demand short technical essays, but give students many prompts, as in the following essay exam question: **Describe . . . with special emphasis on X , Y, and Z. Elaborate on . . . .** Give **specific examples and design features whichmay be useful. When would you consider surgical intervention for this syndrome? Describe the sorts of procedures. . . .** (Rennert, interview and corrrespondence).

Interest in the theory and practice of teaching writing became a central research area in Education at McGill in the mid 1970s. The development of this Effective Written Communication course in McGill's Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing date from that period. Professor Anthony Paré of the Centre commented that writing courses at McGill had been dropped when CEGEPs opened because of the perception that the colleges would take them over. But, he noted, "Writing is not learned once and for all, at any level." Students have become demoralized about writing, as some have been taught through a "deficit model," which put too much emphasis on what they could not, rather than what they could, do. Some of the emphases in the McGill course are on the sense of an audience, writing collaboratively, journals, and writing as an expert. Over the past ten years the faculty engaged in the project held weekly workshops floating ideas and assessing them. Much research was teacher based, arising from classroom experience. Initially, Linda Flower's book, Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing (1985), was used for the course. However five faculty members have now (1990) produced a working edition of their own book, Writing for Ourselves/ Writing for Others, for use in the course. They will be testing its principles during the academic year 1990-1991. In common with much of recent composition theory, their approach to the learning of writing stresses a student-centred model. The teacher is a "co-learner", and students are to "assume responsibility for their own writing" and to "look to their own resources and those of their peers.("Introduction" x). One chapter gives an overview of the uses of language: part I deals with abstraction, connotation, metaphor, for example; part II gives a thumb-nail history of the language; part III briefly discusses some social and political concerns in the uses of the modern language.

C. The Demands of the Workplace

> **"The future of work will consist of learning a living."**
> **—Marshall McLuhan.**

1. The need for skilled workers

Quebec's place in the North American and world economies depends on productive people—those with the knowledge and skills to make products or to serve people. Former Bell Canada Chairman Jean de Grandpré warned of critical shortages of skilled workers in Quebec and Canada in his report to the Advisory Council on [Free-Trade] Adjustment, March 1989:

> Skill shortages are becoming more frequent in the new technology areas. While the demand for scientific skills will no doubt keep increasing,the council noted that Canada ranks behind the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom in terms of the relative number of science graduates (Kuitenbrouwer A8).

But our CEGEPS need to be in touch with industry and business leaders to keep ahead of the job market. "The right training for the right jobs" is how Gaétan Boucher states the objective. As head of the Féderation des CEGEPs, he meets regularly with business leaders to monitor skills needed and keep ahead of technolgical and social change. Today's student will not even get a job on an assembly line without training. Even to work on the production line at IBM in Bromont, he needs a specialized CEGEP diploma. "We need people with some knowledge of electronics or electrical engineering," says Yves Valliquette, IBM's PR Director, "otherwise we start too far back" (Bagnall A4).

And yet Canada's high school drop-out rate is 31%, compared with Germany's 14% and less than 10% in Japan. Quebec again loses 36% of its first-year students in CEGEPs. And our enrolment in many technical and vocational programs continues to drop. The complaint of Jean Pellerin, Personnel Director for Waterville Cellular in the Easter Townships, is that he cannot hire high-school graduates because they cannot handle the complex instructions for machinery on an assembly line. "You interview so many people, young people, twenty years old, and they've graduated from high school. They can barely read and write. They don't seem to know much after grade 11. It's very sad" (Bagnall A1). The phenomenon is world wide, and Quebec's situation is echoed in this comment from Britain: "We were asked to help a literacy and numeracy scheme in one of Britain's cities. The scheme was necessary because 86 per cent (32) of the school leavers could not complete a simple job application form correctly. After 11 years of compulsory schooling they could not even get to first base. . . . (Rae)."

2. The training potential

Is the cup half empty or half full? Looked at positively, at a time of shrinking enrolments, this shortage of skilled workers gives the colleges an excellent opportunity to capture a growing potential student sector. Not only could the CEGEPs train more young people for the jobs that are available, but they could attract the adult learner for retraining. Every year some four million Canadians see their jobs modified in some way, according to Statistics Canada. That is 31% of the labour force (Pilon). Gilles Paquet of the Faculty of Management, University of Ottawa, states that the largest cohort in higher education in the decade ofthe 1990s will be the age group of 35 and over. "This group will call for non-traditional higher education—competent, compact, mixing training with development and education in new creative ways"(200). Training for the jobs of tomorrow will clearly have to include a lot of retraining, because old skills become redundant while technologies and the service sectors continue to grow. Many workers in the vulnerable areas like the tobacco industry, shipbuilding, and textiles are in the 45-55 age range. Training for them means more than upgrading: it means a total redefinition of their work.

All departments in the colleges will have to respond to these training challenges, English as much as any of the Careers sectors, because the communication skills taught in English are essential elements. Flexibility and adaptability will be valued skills, with aptitudes like independence, creative problem-solving, communication and team work. J. Lesourne of the OECD writes that the labour market will be "the scene of a dialectical struggle between a call for generalists, who have a basic education enabling them to understand and manage a complex and unstable environment, and a need for specialists, able to build and control increasingly sophisticated systems" (Etchécopar 10).

(If we as English teachers want to imagine some of the difficulties an untrained work force has in today's society, we might think about how much trouble we ourselves have reading computer manuals and teaching ourselves to do data-processing and spread sheets. Even with graduate degrees in

English, we older learners trying to upgrade our skills can be frustrated with technical language used in these new applications.
How much worse it must be for people who have been working in different fields, having to retrain in an unfamiliar school setting. Reading comprehension, study skills, and psychological adjustments all need attention to make the task that more manageable.)

3. Who will do the training?

If we are to ensure the educated workers of the future we will have to ensure they get the appropriate training. Although Statistics Canada studies have found that 75% of businesses they surveyed did not provide any recognized form of training to their employees, some industries are clearly going to compete with the schools to serve that market. Citing federal government studies done on youth employment, Dennison and Gallagher comment on the strong business and industry drive for more control over job training—providing that Canada's secondary and post-secondary schools can deliver basic skills:

> Industry, which has long been quietly unhappy about the calibre of the products of Canadian formal education and has consistently urged Canadian educational institutions to produce graduates who have solid basic skills and who are highly motivated to be industrious workers. Big industry would be only too happy to provide job-specific training for young Canadians, provided that Canada's colleges could deliver to them graduates who were anxious

> to work hard and could read, write, analyze, and exercise critical skills(170).

In a Canada-Britain colloquium **Post Secondary Education: Preparation for the World of Work,** papers on education policy issues concentrated on the necessity of keeping and educating students beyond the secondary level, the need for general education rather than specialized training, the importance of specific discipline contents as well as skills and broad theories. Gilles Paquet wrote about "the learning enterprise: a switch of consumers to non-traditional instruction and a rapid growth of providers of new and different learning services." His view was that entrepreneurs part of "the Shadow higher Education," are ready to take over when government supported training programs (like public CEGEPs) falter (200). The outlook for the conventional teacher is rather bleak, and that profession has to adjust to new realities:

> Teacher training institutions are still pumping out thousands of graduates annually. With enrollment down and more and more training being lined up for computerized methods, the teaching graduate finds himself/herself with obsolete skills before he/she starts and nobody to teach either (Feather 81).

Major employers indicate that they already do a lot of in-house training. XEROX has a Vice-President in charge of Education (Susan Robinson). So many people in Montreal want Bell Canada to give workshops on preparing for work at Bell that the training personnel no longer go out; they do all their workshops in-house, including seminars on communications. The Royal Bank requires job candidates to do written tests in some Montreal branches, and it emphasizes the importance of writing well in English and French. Personnel managers are becoming concerned at the quality of writing in applicants, and regularly give feedback on their concerns to Laval University (Chiasson, interview).

4. What do employers look for?

a. Literacy is high on everybody's list. Canadian Business cites a Southam News Survey that 24% of the general pubic is illiterate, including 15% of the latest high-school graduates. It goes on to report on Conference Board of Canada findings on the cost of low literacy rates: More than one third of Canadian companies report difficulties introducing new technology and training employees in new skills because of lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills. A 1988 task force estimated that the problem costs business approximately $4.2 billion a year. Almost $1.6 billion stems from industrial accidents, and a further $2.5 billion from lost productivity (Litchfield 60).

Literacy means competence in both the written and spoken word. Godfrey in the Financial Post quotes a study of 136 Ontario firms revealing that the number of companies reporting new workers with significant reading and math deficiencies had doubled over four years (2). It was not simply that the schools became weaker, but that the jobs demanded increasingly higher levels of reading and math. Etchécopar makes an interesting case for developing a higher level of scientific awareness for future workers in age of technical advance, ethical decision-making, and media distortion. His argument could as easily apply to the higher-level English skills of reading critically: recognizing propaganda and the abuses of language, being able to evaluate an argument and to distinguish fact from opinion.

b. Life-long learning Education cannot continue to be marginalized in our young people's lives. Where our high school and CEGEP students are in short-term programs and spend about 183 days in school, the average in Germany and Japan is 243 days. This means that, by the time Japanese students reach the equivalent of Grade 12, they have spent about two additional years in school. In fact, since they also start school earlier, some estimates go as high as four extra years by the age of 18. How they spend those years is the crucial question. When the CEGEPs began, students arrived with about 600 hours of high-school science. Now, they arrive with about 300 hours of science training, according to Arnold Dagenais, Dean of Science at Vanier (Kuitenbrouwer A8). And while they are in college many are trying to hold down 20 or more hours a week in part-time jobs.

Life-long learning means more than quality time in school for young people, of course. It also means that older employees (in the 35 and over age group) have to be prepared to retrain and to learn new skills. Since 80% of what is learned in college becomes obsolete within 10-15 years, workers have to upgrade throughout their working lives. Frank Feather of the Canadian Bank of Commerce wrote that **mobility** will be a key factor in the changing workplace: the ability to move mentally and physically. Again, **resourcefulness and flexibility** will be required to help people cope with change and to change with it (81).

c. **Generic skills** Gilles Paquet of the Faculty of Management, University of Ottawa, argues that training in the sense of specific preparation for a specific job is outmoded. Similarly, general overviews free of content or "schemata," to use Hirsch's term, leave the student free floating intellectually. What is needed is the linking of contents and skills. The word **generalist** recurs constantly in the literature: a person with excellent reading, writing, and speaking skills, mathematics, and a broad training in critical thinking. These are generic skills--abilities which are transferable from one job, or field, to another. From the Canada-Britain Colloquium on higher education, John Rae constrasts the emphases of British and Japanese schools:

> The principal lesson of Japanese economic success is that it is based on a population which has a high level of general (as distinct from specialized or vocational) education. If we look at the education of Japanese young people up to the age of 18 we find: (a) that the vast majority - 95 per cent - are still in full time education at the age of 18 despite a school leaving age of 15; (b)

> that the education they are receiving up to 18 is general i.e. it is neither specialized in the British sense of narrowing down to 3 A level subjects at 16, nor specialized in the sense of becoming at that age vocational training. As is well known, training in Japan is largely the responsibility of the companies that students join either post-school or post-university. The school system is not geared to producing specific skills (30-31).

When we consider the falling literacy rates and abbreviated science training of Quebec's young people, we can apply this picture to our own practices.

Dennison and Gallagher imagined the scenario if the colleges were to focus more on the generic skills of reading, critical thinking, writing, and analysis. In their view, this focus would rationalize post-secondary education and eliminate overlaps: "Increasing specialization would result: the universities to produce scholars and professionals, the colleges to train in basic skills, and business, industry, and technical schools to do on-the-job training."

They go on to argue that the narrow job description, the specific skills, and the early career choice will not work for future employment and continuing job satisfaction:

> Even the concept of work specialization, per se, is under review within Canada. The rapidly evolving nature of the job market and the accompanying need for worker adaption to change indicated a requirement for greater emphasis upon the acquisition of generic skill, particularly those associated with communications, science, and technology. Further, those same conditions suggest that young people need a broader education so that they can make a more intelligent choice of area of specialization. More careful choice of programme options by students might well lead to more prolonged satisfaction with later vocational choices (242-243).

5. Conclusion: integration and formation fondamentale

Generic skills are a major element of the English classroom, but our teaching is not limited to skills. We also teach literature and integrate a wide realm of studies: history, politics, aesthetics, psychology, and other arts. Many of our faculty are engaged in projects and interchanges to make **literacy across the curriculum** a reality. Many work actively with other disciplines in integrative studies, certificate programs, and majors programs. Cross-disciplinary contacts and exchanges of ideas stimulate our own thinking and benefit our students.

This integration of studies is a recurrent theme in Quebec education, and we discuss it in more detail in our next chapter. But in the context here of training young people and retraining adults, we want to emphasize that faculty play the leading role in helping students find meaning in what they study—not just the isolated topics of one course, but the interplay of ideas across the curriculum. André Marsolais, Chairman of the Commission de l'enseignement professionel of the Conseil des collèges, comments directly on the need to keep the careers students in the mainstream, to recognize and value what they are doing and encourage them. "Some of the general education courses that are part of all vocational training programs are given side by side with them and yet are almost totally disconnected from them. This does nothing to encourage careers students to sink their teeth into their studies. The huge drop-out rate shows this" (7).

As English teachers, working with generic skills and teaching across the disciplines, we have a unique opportunity to help all the students integrate and synthesize their learning. But we have to be just as flexible, creative and resourceful in this as we expect other "older learners" in a changing job market to be. We need to teach ourselves how to retain students, help them grow intellectually over two-three years, and make stronger links with the other disciplines, especially in the career sectors.

We do not separate content from skills in our best classes as English teachers. And the backgrounds we provide through reading, discussion, writing, and analysis of texts helps students develop their critical reasoning as well as their personal growth as competent citizens. Roger Elmes wrote in the *Canadian Studies Bulletin* for the ACCC that the colleges have a unique role in shaping the student's development:

> In post-secondary education we have a special role which can no longer be ignored. Draftsmen, auto-mechanics, surveyors, nurses, plumbers, child-care workers. . . all are eligible voters, as are university-transfer students, ... biology majors, philosophers. We must dedicate ourselves to the proposition that no community college student will graduate without a realistic level of exposure to critical thought on Canada's political, economic, and social culture (Dennison 283).

Core English is built into the CEGEPs to provide that exposure.

Chapter VIII. Renewing English CEGEP Curriculum

During the past two years, the English and French CEGEP curricula have come under increasing scrutiny, focussed especially on their performance in teaching the basic abilities of language use: communication skills in writing and speech, and comprehension and analysis of various forms of discourse. CEGEPs as a whole attract press attention, and each of the programs in turn is being re-evaluated. In concluding this report on CEGEP English curriculum, we will briefly review some of these issues and summarize our consultations with teachers. Overall, despite the efforts at centralized planning and coordination of objectives, departments and individuals are clearly the decision makers for the field. As professionals, given adequate information and time for consultation, they are the people who will make things happen.

VIII. A. Vers l'an 2000

Consultation and evaluation in broad strokes is the aim of the document Vers l' An 2000: Les priorités de développement de l'enseignement collégial. (1990) from the Conseil des colleges, which looks to "the educational sector, unions, the business and corporate world, professional associations, etc." for some direct answers to its questions. The mission of the colleges is to teach, and this consultation document invites those sectors to evaluate CEGEP teaching objectives, structures, and performance. Results of the consultation will be made public in the Spring of 1992, in time for the 25th anniversary of the founding of the CEGEPs. Both the questionnaire and the results are intended to promote inquiry and reflection throughout the system.

Following are key questions from the document which apply directly to Core English in the colleges. The descriptors "formation fondamentale," "coherence," "integration," and "polyvalence" all touch on the central issue of what skills and what fields of knowledge are appropriate to teach all students in Core English in the CEGEPs:

#16 Is the concept of formation fondamentale sufficiently clear so that a) it is operational and b) its workability can be evaluated? Is it also relevant to all types of education at the college level?

#17 Should the coherence of the network be reinforced, or should colleges be left more latitude to develop their own programs?

#18 How can more program integration be conceived and carried out?

#19 Does the diversity of program organization allow for the needs of education for the future?

#20 Does the program structure of the DEC, composed of obligatory, concentration \specialization, and complementary courses, adequately promote polyvalence and general education? If so, how can these objectives be assured in the other programs?

21. What should be the core education in programs leading to the DEC? Should the 4 French\English courses, 4 philosophy-\humanities courses, and 4 physical education courses be maintained?

We discuss the concept of formation fondamentale and CEGEP English curriculum in the final section of our report, below. The integration of knowledge and abilities is a heavy demand to put on a 16-17 year old just coming out of high school. We argue that some of this integrative work should be being done at the college level among the disciplines and within the program structure of each English (and Humanities) department. Some initiatives are already underway, and these should be recognized and clearly articulated as potential models.

VIII. B. The Conseil Report on English Teaching

The Conseil des collèges distributed its advisory report L'enseignement de l'anglais dans les collèges anglophones in the Spring of 1991, two years after its report on French. In its 40 pages, the report concentrates on language skills, with little attention to the literature component of the curriculum. It acknowledges the attention already given to English language improvement in the anglophone sector, and recommends giving more support to these measures. Broadly, the Conseil recommends no sweeping overhaul of the CEGEP English curriculum:

> The Conseil sees no reason to modify the general nature of English courses which, according to the description in the Cahiers, deal with both language and literature. On the contrary, as long as the objectives pertaining to language skills are achieved—once they have been defined—this system seems perfectly valid (22).

However, the qualifiers in this statement as well as several of the concrete questions and recommendations of the report as a whole focus squarely on defining specific objectives and evaluating their achievement. **Specific answers** are requested for such questions as, what level of English language competence should the student have attained by graduation from college? (19)

The report notes the "considerable leeway" enjoyed by the colleges and departments and the "multitude", "plethora," and "wide variety," of courses available to the students. But breadth is not depth, the report implies, when it comes to defining clear objectives. Whether this latitude ensures coherent, quality education is still to be demonstrated, the Conseil suggests. In this it is consistent with a series of reports over the past five years recommending more coherence in all CEGEP programs, clarification of what we mean by college-level skills, articulation of student "learning paths," (cheminements) and evaluation of what is achieved.

For example, it deplores the fact that approximately 20% of graduates of secondary schools are judged underprepared for college-level work and then 20% of graduates of colleges again are judged underprepared for university-level work (13). However, without consistent criteria and comparable tests for evaluating student performance across the three levels, these figures are intriguing but inconclusive.

The report questions the granting of credit for remedial courses like those in the -06 and -07 groups, arguing that these are below college level work and should thus be taken as complementary, even non-credit, courses-*for which extra resources must be provided.* It cites the *Cahier* statement that it would be "abnormal" for students to take all of their Core course from these groups (which include the "intermediate" course 603-108.)

Unlike their French-department colleagues, English departments are free to organize their literature courses in any way they wish, according to the report. "Much like the social studies program to date, it is difficult to deny that the wide variety of courses offered, combined with the absence of specific objectives, may result in largely differing scenarios" (24). In fact, our colleges differ widely in the organization of their English offerings, from tightly structured programs to completely open choice for students. But the Conseil makes no attempt to distinguish among the various approaches to English curriculum in the colleges. A casual reader might not realize that the large number of courses referred to covers all the colleges, and that some of the departments teach only a few, depending on the approach they take to the discipline.

Despite the marked lack of specific objectives or explicit literacy goals, the Conseil gives the English colleges (faculty and administration) a good report card in tackling the English language deficiencies despite fixed resources. Learning and reading centres, diagnostic tests, and writing courses are not new to the English network. Indeed, literacy across the curriculum has been actively promoted for years (and may now finally receive more financial support in all the colleges.) The truth is again that English remedial courses started appearing in the mid-70's and have been largely paid for in most English departments by the larger enrollments that teachers have had to take on in more advanced literature courses.

To judge from the report and its recommendations, what will change now, in line with current policy in the French colleges, is that *extra resources will now come on top of the regular Core allocations*. Thus the college-level work in English literature and language will no longer suffer by unbalanced allocations.

The summary of the section on the organization of English courses (2.4) clearly acknowledges that individual departments have separate identities within the broad parameters of the *Cahier*. Common characteristics include the provision of a series of elementary courses, a series of remedial courses, transitional courses, and a fourth series of courses: truly college-level (*d'un niveau proprement collégial*) (21) . Individually, in fact each department or college takes its own approach(es) to the teaching of the mother-tongue. This is true for the French colleges as well, as we have demonstrated below, in section VIII. C. 1. of this report. This acknowledgement of individual differences is important to highlight at this point because it qualifies slightly what might be seen as too centralizing an approach in the recommendations of the Conseil's Report. So the Conseil concludes that the legal and regulatory framework already exists to give English colleges the freedom to implement its recommendations for French instruction, including the following:

1) To specify (if only locally/ *ne serait-ce que localement*) the objectives of English teaching

2) To involve all college employees in realising these objectives

3) To ensure that all students receive adequate training in composition

4) To offer effective remedial courses.

1) The Conseil's Recommendations

The Conseil, an advisory body, addresses Recommendations #1-6 to the Ministry, #7 to the Ministry *and* colleges, and #8 just to the colleges:

1. • clear definition of English literature and language objectives, especially for language skills
   - harmonization with secondary and university teaching
   - objectives to be stated in the *Cahier*.
2. Re-examination of the 4 Core courses to ensure that
   - they correspond to defined objectives

- they facilitate coherent learning streams.

3. Examination of remedial writing courses, especially the Language Use courses 106-406 to make them non-credit.

4. • Introduction of fixed student/teacher ratios for writing courses

   - Equal treatment of English and French colleges in this respect

   - Allocation of additional resources to ensure that other courses are not penalized thereby.

5. Analysis of needs of Learning Centres and supplementary funds to support them in language services.

6. Analysis of faculty development in all disciplines to ensure literacy standards across the curriculum.

   - Provision of additional resources if required for this goal.

7. Selection or creation of adequate tools to evaluate the language abilities of the students

   - Regular administration of such evaluations on large enough student samples to monitor progress.

8. Continued attention to instruction in language skills:

   - appropriate levels and ratios
   - student support through learning centres, etc.
   - sensitizing all teachers to language quality, providing professional development in this area, ensuring that all course outlines include language quality among their objectives.

- integration of language instruction into all programs and streams available to the students.

2) Conclusions and applications

The Conseil report treats college teachers as professionals, able to define the field, set objectives, evaluate their students, their courses, and themselves, and to collaborate with colleagues. It also—and this is important to underscore—recognizes that departments and colleges are responsible for setting institutional goals. Obviously, more clarity and structure are explicit concerns in the document, but power to meet them is still largely in the teachers' hands. From our discussions with departments over the course of this research, we can assert that some of these recommendations will clearly provoke considerable discussion in the months to come, as outlined briefly below. But we cannot overemphasize the importance of local consultation, discussion, and agreement as the *sine qua non* of any meaningful renewal of first principles. We record here observations based on our meetings with the departments, with the cautionary note that this feedback is not from the whole faculty:

Conseil Recommendation #1: Feedback Departments are wary of any single language-skill assessment that could be trivialized into multiple-choice error counting. As we state in Chapters

II and IV of this report discussion and analysis of the secondary curriculum is still continuing. Harmonizing with university teaching is even more problematical in our polyvalent colleges. (The current Stuart Smith inquiry into university teaching diagnoses major problems in the quality of teaching at that level in any case.)

Conseil Recommendation #2: Feedback Departmental and college-level examination of objectives will yield the most fruitful results.

Conseil Recommendation #3: Feedback Especially at a time of shrinking enrollments, non-credit courses will be a problem to implement unless all the colleges agree to them.

Conseil Recommendations #4-6: Feedback Colleges, particularly the DSPs, can do a signal service in implementing these recommendations. English departments do not have the necessary information or powers to assure these resources on their own. To promote professional development, all the departments, the DSPs, and the unions will have to work in harmony.

Conseil Recommendation #7: Feedback No single "standardized" test is in use now. The trend seems increasingly toward writing samples, marked holistically. As with the secondary English Language Arts evaluation, such samples would have to be marked using consistent criteria for any reliability. A combination of kinds of summative evaluation (both standardized tests and holistically-marked writing samples) might be possible, but both the test and the evaluation criteria would have to be worked through and agreed upon by the departments. Similarly, the "evaluation par echantillonage" approach currently on trial in CEGEP Ste. Foy would need negotiation. None of these is, of course, an insuperable problem.

Conseil Recommendation #8 Again, discussion, workshops, and negotiation within the whole community of any college would be both healthy and essential to make Literacy Across the Curriculum more than a pious wish.

VIII. C. The wide-ranging curriculum, across the province

It is often remarked that the English colleges give a wide range of different courses. This assessment is not entirely accurate. Some colleges in fact give very few courses, and others give a great many. Further, any documents listing courses give an exaggerated view of their range, since many are simply different titles for the same kinds of courses. Finally, in some colleges, teachers and departments argue that they are actively encouraged by their administration to give as many different courses as possible in order to draw on the maximum allocation of resources for the college. All of those factors, then, temper any glib numbers games with course titles.

But there is some truth in the impression from official documents that the range is wide. In its 1984 Cahier revision, the Provincial Committee sorted and classified the courses that were offered in the various colleges, dividing them into the required or Core courses, and the complementary or Option courses. Within these two classes were the further subdivisions **General** (Students may take 4 courses from these categories) and **Specific** (Students may take only one course with each of these numbers). From its beginning in 1969, with Dawson as the only college offering English courses, the English college curriculum grew steadily until about 1987. During that period, each of the separate colleges and each campus within colleges was free to develop autonomously, and the Cahier simply reflects the breadth of offerings possible. But by that year of 1987, the two largest colleges Vanier and Dawson had secured funding to consolidate their real estate in new buildings and to close down the separate campuses, eliminating their Pavillon status and merging curricula in the process. The separate status of Lafontaine (Dawson) and Snowdon (Vanier) thus came to an end and with it, the distinctive pedagogical approaches of those separate departments.

At its broadest extent, therefore, the English curriculum in 1987-88 covered 10 separate English departments in the big colleges , as well as the smaller CEGEPs of Gaspé and Sept-Isles and the 4 departments in the small private colleges in Montreal. The Provincial Committee's analysis of the curriculum, "Titles and Numbers Used in English Mother

Tongue," covers the following 10 departments: Dawson Lafontaine and Selby, Vanier Ste. Croix and F.I.S./Snowdon, Heritage, Marianoplis, John Abbott, and Champlain St. Lambert, Lennoxville, and St. Lawrence. This document, listing categories and titles only, runs to 21 pages. In it are listed the 42 Core categories covering 680 Core course titles and the 26 Options categories covering 125 options course titles. But again, to read those titles as the **curriculum in English** would be a misrepresentation.

Wide variety is perceived by some teachers and departments as the ideal way to offer a broad liberal education to the students. The fact is that any one student takes only 4 of the Core courses—not even 10% of the **categories of courses available—** and with the failures of registration systems available in the big colleges, very few students get the course of their choice in any case. (This is the perennial complaint of students at Dawson and Vanier.) A broad range is available, but the student has little opportunity to plan a coherent curriculum within it.

A number of important reasons can be adduced for the breadth of these course offerings:

1) The magnitude of the challenge of teaching both the English language and English literature to a multicultural population in a polyvalent educational context;

2) The deliberate decision in the founding years of Vanier and Dawson to hire faculty on the basis of variety and singularity rather than on common or shared philosophy and goals.

3) The enormity of range of literature available in the English language: 1000 years of history in British, American , and Commonwealth literary texts, in addition to all the works world wide that have been translated into English;

4) The awareness of the importance of understanding other cultures and traditions (for example, Quebec, West Indian, Latin American, Soviet Union, Jewish, Greek, Roman, and modern European);

5) A variety of approaches to the study of literature, including mythological, thematic, historical, generic, archetypal, philosophical, psychological, political, and feminist;

6) The awareness that the concept of "text" is a broad one, encompassing science fiction, detective fiction, humour, fantasy, gothic or horror fiction, libretti and lyrics, beyond the standard literary canon;

7) The inclusion of other media, including film, radio, and television;

8) The conscious decision in many colleges to make many of courses available to most students at a variety of levels;

9) The decision, beginning in the early 70's in most colleges, to develop a broad range of "writing-intensive" courses to serve the students less well prepared for more advanced college-level work and to add those courses to the course offerings available in Core. (French colleges, by contrast, have not traditionally offered the same kinds of composition courses.)

Of necessity, this has been only a brief recapitulation of the reasons for course variety during the first twenty years of the CEGEPs' history, but it does touch on the three key elements in play: the teacher, the material to be taught, and the student and his society.

Since 1987-88, with the merging of the curricula at the two biggest colleges and recent changes in Marianopolis and Champlain St. Lambert, a movement towards establishing at least a rudimentary foundational or basic level seems to be gaining ground. The range of courses in Vanier, Champlain St. Lambert, and Marianopolis is narrowing somewhat, as those colleges institute a one-semester introductory course for all or most incoming students. Elsewhere, reviewing the history of the individual colleges and their current practices in this research project we have discussed this movement towards a foundational semester (or more) in many colleges: an orientation in writing and analytical skills and awareness of literary genre.

1. Comparing French and English Practices

One of the myths circulating in English departments about our French colleagues is that they and their students are locked in a rigid structure. And the corollary myth is that the English courses are a chaotic grab-bag. The French CEGEPs do, of course, organize their curricula differently. Their obligatory courses are arranged in a sequence of courses determined by an orientation determined by each college and department. "Orientation" in this context means a direction defined by the particular groups of activities chosen to meet the three subjects of study in all the CEGEP French programs: 1) Language, 2) Literature, and 3) Communications. Across the province, each department of French has determined one or more orientations which its Core courses are designed to develop. As in English, there are four required courses, but these are structured by the college and department in one or more sequential patterns, which are considered to provide a systematic, progressive, and coherent learning path for the students: "un cheminement." To judge from the official descriptions of the orientations in the Cahier de l'enseignement collégial 1987-88, these may be very broadly described:

1) **Orientation A) "Langue, Littérature, et Société** brings a thematic perspective to the study of the uses of language in literary and other forms of discourse.

2) **Orientation B) "Lecture, Analyse et Production"** focusses on analysis of written texts/discourses and on creative writing of a variety of forms.

3) **Orientation C) " Langue, Langage, and Communication"** studies language and the uses of language in various communication modes, oral and written.

4) **Orientation D) "Langue et Discours Littéraire"** concentrates on literary texts in all the genres (1-61) . As can be seen, both the basic skills or abilities of formation fondamentale and the knowledge base of language and literature as a field are represented in this outline.

It is important to note here that the individual departments have the latitude of choosing the patterns for their students. They choose one or more of the orientations above, themselves rather general. They choose the courses themselves, drawn from a bank with fairly broadly defined objectives. They choose the order of the courses. And finally they choose the modes of implementation and kinds of activities required to meet the objectives of the orientation(s).

What is striking here is that the individual departments and colleges articulate one or more of these broad approaches as their orientation(s). There are differences but also important parallels in the practices of the English colleges. _De facto_, the smaller English colleges define an orientation by the kinds of course they offer. Thus, Heritage and Champlain St. Lawrence would fit almost perfectly into Orientation D of this scheme: Heritage in its historical and generic approaches to British, Canadian, and American literary traditions, and Champlain St. Lawrence in its generic approach to literature. Again, some of the smaller private colleges could be said to focus exclusively on Orientation C of this scheme: writing and language use courses, with very little literature. And the largest polyvalent English colleges follow more than one orientation: whole groups of courses exclusively focussed on writing skills, others entirely thematic, and others combining literary history and study of genre. Within these large colleges there are also smaller subgroups offering a certificate in addition to the DEC, like the Liberal Arts, International Studies, Women's Studies, Reflections, Quebec/Canada Studies, Peace Studies, and Environmental Studies programs. These are clearly ways of orientating students through grouping English courses in combination with those of disciplines. (We have more to say about this phenomenon under C. 4. below: **Integration by Selection.**)

2. The Question of course numbers: English and French

It is in the sheer numbers of courses (and in the number of course numbers) that the differences become apparent. Perhaps because of the historical precedent of operating with a list of numbers up to 299 in the early days of the English colleges, the departments and Provincial Committee have tried to preserve as many different permutations and combinations of numbers and courses as possible for the faculty and students. But the actual practices more than the number lists have to be looked at closely before any meaningful comparisons and contrasts will emerge.

a. Similarities in Approach:

1. The Specific Category: Literary modes and genres

On the question of course numbers, again, the English Cahier allows the students to take only one course each from the seven listed in the Specific category:

110-Poetry
120-The Short Story
130-The Essay
140-The Novel
150-Drama
160-Great Works
170-Specific Author

The principle behind this organization is exactly parallel to that in the French Cahier: students should not specialize too narrowly in any one specific **kind** of course, but should have a broader exposure. The first five from the Specific Category listed above, then, correspond to the modes or genres listed for the 13 possible required French courses (102-Discours Poétique; 202-Théâtre; 302-Discours Narratif; 402-Essai) in the Cahier, with the Short Story course separated from the other narrative category of the Novel. Indeed, the French list overall is heavily weighted to the genre approach to literature.

2. Other kinds of courses

The English courses also include in this Specific Category group courses focussed on Great Works (The Bible is the commonest example) and Specific Authors (Shakespeare is given in many of the departments under this category). The Shakespeare or Chaucer course and studies in the Bible are both like standard university courses. There is no parallel in what is listed in the French Cahier. The English practice again is to ensure that each possible type of course has its own number.

On the other hand, the 13 required French courses include, in addition to the 4 literary genres, the following: two courses focussed on **language** (111-Français and 902-Linguistique); one course on **media** (204-Communication et médias); two on **writing** (103 and 203); one on **literary analysis** (303-Lecture et analyse); one on **themes** (904-Langue, communication et and société); and two on **national literatures** (407-Littérature de la francophonie and 935-Littérature et Société québecoise). This classification of those courses is our inference, it should be noted. Again here, the French courses in these groups are very limited, with one or two numbers at most: students could not take four different thematic courses for example, or three national literature courses.

To further limit choice, each French department selects one or more Orientations of the four already described, and these reduce the number of courses offered in that institution. To take Collège Marie-Victorin as an example, the Orientation is D: **Langue et discours littéraires**, and the courses available are the following:

111-Français
902-Linguistique
103-Communication et écriture
302-Discours narratif
102-Discours poétique
202-Théâtre
402-Essai.

(In that college, then, the choices are reduced to 7 out of the original 13.)

b. Principal differences

1. The Specific Category

Students in English programs do not all have to take one of these Specific Category courses. From the interviews and research into documents, we find that most Quebec French departments require at least Théâtre and Quebec literature. English students could go all through CEGEP without reading a play or doing a single course in Canadian Literature.

2. The General Category

The English colleges have taken the position that students should have access to as many as **four** courses each in **nine** General Categories:

National Literature
Historical Period
Thematic Studies
Survey of Literature
Literature and Other Media
Language Use
Effective Reading and Writing
Composition and Literature
Specialized Language Studies

The outstanding difference, then, between the two systems is here. For English courses, there is a whole other set of categories, General Categories, in which students could take all 4 courses.

It is theoretically possible, for example, for a student to take 4 thematic courses: Love, War, Utopias, Children's Literature, Alienation, for example. Again, he could take 4 national literature courses: British, American, Commonwealth, Black Writers, Slavic, Canadian and Quebec, Greek, Jewish, Japanese, etc. These categories are similar to a single course or two in the French system outlined above (National, Thematic, and Media). But with the larger number of courses within them, courses can become very specialized: Baseball fiction, or Black, modern, women writers, for example. Again, the English general group offers courses in under Writing and Language, but it offers **more** of them, generally conceived of in a developmental sequence corresponding to the numbers (106 is the lowest level, 406 the highest, in one group for example).

The other salient point about this group is that the National, Historical, and Period groups are all imitating the model of the traditional approaches in university English departments, and the historical survey and period groups (18th Century or Medieval for example) have no counterpart in the French courses.

3. The English Introductory courses: developmental strategies

There are major differences in the practices of different English colleges, as we have pointed out in detail. Some colleges offer only introductory-level national and historical approaches; others offer only introductory-level genre courses; others offer only communications courses.

But in all but two of the large polyvalent colleges in the system, a compulsory introduction to literature and communication course has been implemented (generally of one semester). In fact, the departments are **beginning to use the same number for this course in all the departments.** There are local variations, but the courses basically introduce the genres, outline key literary terminology, focus on composition skills, and demand several short essays, usually on the literature. Where it is given, this foundational Introduction course narrows student choice to two or three courses in the succeeding semesters. The French colleges do not have this foundational course at all.

4. The English Composition Courses

Since the mid 1970s, most English departments have been offering composition courses in response to perceived needs of the students, who are usually screened into the courses at registration or after one semester. Again, there are local differences, but most English colleges limit the number of "writing intensive courses" that students can take. These courses further narrow the choices that any one student can have, especially when they are followed up by a required Introduction to English Literature, for example. These writing courses fall under the General Category B above.

5. The French Orientations in local curriculum

English colleges have no equivalent for the four Orientations discussed above. A very useful local exercise in curriculum planning would be for departments to think through and articulate exactly what their local approaches and objectives are. Each department has an orientation, but few have defined it as a public stance or position. Gerald Graff's ideas on frameworks, "how we situate ourselves in reference to text" would be a point of departure (262).

c. Summary

Let us reiterate some parallels. The taxonomies of the two systems are roughly parallel: language and literature divided into genres/modes, thematic approaches, national approaches, media as discourse, language or linguistics courses, and composition or writing courses.

The English Cahier adds two major approaches in its Survey group and its Historical Period group. In addition, the English Cahier has four "Group B General Language Categories" subdivided into 16 courses. These groups are conceived of developmentally, ranging from second language courses (106-206-306-406) to Rhetoric (209) and Creative Writing (409). So the English Cahier is both imitating university period-coverage curricular models and offering a wide range of composition and remedial courses. In these two elements, it takes a very different approach from the French Cahier practice.

We see here that the French system is not quite so rigid as it is rumoured to be. Locally, the colleges can plan orientations and design courses and activities to meet their objectives—within the 13 basic Core courses. And the English system has a rationale and is not quite so loose as it is rumoured to be. Both have similar taxonomies or classifications of Language and Literature studies. But the writers of the English Cahier have not been satisfied with generic or general names for the general groups and have insisted on more developmental levels and more specific definitions. So by this quadrupling of names and numbers here in each general category, they have vastly increased the total number of courses they list. In reality, however, colleges differ in how many courses they offer (from a low of 6 to a high of over 90) and registration severely narrows the possiblities for any one student.

In the highly structured English departments, the faculty and DSP have determined what the student needs—and that is exactly what he takes. In the English departments with no structured curriculum, the faculty and the DSP determine that the students need the maximum possible choice—and the vagaries of registration decide what the student can take. In the middle group of departments between these two extremes, the student's curriculum is structured for one semester and unstructured in the rest.

This analysis has not attempted to exhaust the subject, but to clarify actual practices. Again, the intention is neither to rationalize nor apologize for the organizational strategies of the departments in either language or in any one college. It **has been** an attempt to go beyond simple number calculations and to get at the unstated taxonomies underlying them. Finally, and this is where our focus belongs, it has tried to look at this information **from the perspective of what**

the students actually can take. Any orientation or any framework in either language has to start with what the student needs and what he can actually take—not with anybody's imaginary wish-list.

3) Towards integration by structure

Professor Claude Lessard, Department of Education at the University of Montreal, has commented that a key element has been missing in CEGEP education: that of integration of learning (Vanier College workshop, October 1990). This concept of the need for integration is central to many of the reports and consultation documents in circulation as the CEGEPs approach their 25th year.

Students leaving high schools and starting to study in our largest colleges are isolated, and their learning also comes in discrete units. Pouring sets of facts into them in time for their exams simply fragments their knowledge, and it is the rare student with the intellectual maturity to make meaning out of the disparate pieces. The same phenomenon can be seen at the university level, where again it alienates the student and wastes valuable time. Research on the high level of science drop-outs in American universities demonstrates that students simply turn off fields in which they are passive learners. Teachers lose them by never providing "the big picture": the frameworks of intellectual and historical background that make the content of the course meaningful in the widest sense (Rigden and Tobias 19-20). Integration in Lessard's sense is akin to Hirsch's cultural literacy or, here, science literacy: developing an ability to synthesize information and interrelate it with prior knowledge. Research into reading (Hirsch) and science is clearly demonstrating not only that the student needs to integrate his learning, but that the teachers should take an integrative approach in their teaching.

In common with education systems throughout North America, the largest English CEGEPs initially adopted an unstructured approach in Core English and Humanities. Teachers were encouraged to develop a wide variety of course and students were free to choose any course they wanted. Thus, the Ste.-Croix English department curriculum was described in 1988-89 as follows:

> . . . designed to offer the widest possible selection of courses to a diversified student body. . . . as rich and varied as possible, offering many different national literatures such as West Indian, Greek, and Slavic, various studies of genre, many thematic courses designed to appeal to different interest groups, and historical courses for . . . literary backgrounds. Students are encouraged to choose what appeals to them in the sequence which they find most meaningful. . . . diversity of course content and methodologies, non-streamed and non-sequential course structure, and maximum choice for both students and teachers.

What we as individual teachers can forget, however, is that a single course is only part of a four-course sequence in the student's learning. Optimizing choice also optimizes randomness.

In the past two years, however, some integration of students by level has begun at Vanier Ste.-Croix, Marianopolis, and Champlain St.Lambert. Since 1987-88, with the merging of the curricula at the two biggest colleges and recent changes in Marianopolis and Champlain St. Lambert, this movement towards establishing at least a rudimentary foundational or basic level seems to be gaining ground. For example, the range of courses for the students in those colleges is narrowing somewhat, with the institution of a one-semester introductory course for some or most incoming students.

4) Integration by Selection

Most English departments are also gradually regrouping into smaller subgroups of personnel and courses. Over the years, the list of Majors or Certificate programs has grown. The phenomenon, as might have been predicted, is most obvious in the biggest polyvalent English CEGEPs: Dawson, John Abbott, and Vanier. While the majority of students continue to have free choice from an unstructured range of courses, the students in these sub-programs have a package of courses which the faculty have preselected for them, usually by theme. Liberal Arts at John Abbott, for example, has "a rigorous sequence of specified courses [which] must be followed by each student. . . (Calendar,43).

These colleges have always argued for the broadest possible free choice for the bulk of their students. But in the case of certain faculty and certain groups of students, restriction and control are increasingly presented positively. The English offerings are limited by the faculty, and the students simply choose to go into the specialized program. There are no remedial courses, for example, but a selection of literature courses. The marketing of the Liberal Arts and Reflections packages at Dawson , for instance, stresses **continuity, concentration, careful design and construction, teams of congenial teaching personnel, small-group atmosphere**, etc. The small groups, seminars, and pre-selected curricula are said to promote **connections** and **integration of learning**. The department promotions present themselves as an elite, requiring superior grades and an interview before enrolment, for example. Furthermore, most of these packages are directed at the pre-university student. Their advertisements overtly state it, and their registration history confirms it. A leaflet for the Liberal Arts program at Vanier (limited to 40 students over four semesters) promotes its "Superior Preparation":

> The design and content of the Program, with the high degree of cooperation between teachers and students, make the Liberal Arts an excellent gateway to the professions: law, government, teaching, advanced social science, fine arts, and public-spirited business careers.

It is not surprising, of course, that the Careers students have little interest or opportunity for registration in such programs. The careers students often do not have the flexibility of schedules to allow them to take part in these programs, and their needs and interests have so far not been served by this new movement. Traditionally, careers students are in lock-step registration patterns dictated by their own concentration areas. They have limited free time in their schedules, and the practical stage work and pre-requisites demanded in some of their fields leave them little access to restricted-enrolment courses.

But we do note that the Parent Commission Report principles, emphasizing of a solid general education for all students is under erosion here. Core English increasingly is splitting students into subgroups based on classes like academic level, career versus university orientation, and gender. Ideally, these same principles of rigour, concentration, coherence, community, and integration should be applied more widely—to all the students and all the courses. If it is good curricular planning for some, then it is good for all. The interdisciplinary planning and cooperation in these programs also energizes faculty and gives them new challenges—all to the good in renewing the mission of the colleges.

5) Conclusion.

The principle of departmental autonomy is much cherished by the English colleges. The college itself is unarguably the best place for colleagues to meet, plan, implement and assess any curricular projects. It can be argued further that many departments in their separate ways have begun to articulate their particular goals.

It is very significant in this regard that Dennison and Gallagher wrote of the pedagogical, psychological, and financial benefits of scaling down Canadian colleges and of regrouping into more cohesive units:

> In and beyond the 1980's, Canada's colleges might be well advised to scale down rather than expand and, if necessary, provoke the establishment of more colleges or more campuses. The advantages of more personalized education-through smaller classes, more individualized instruction, more direct contacts between learner and instructor-coupled with hidden overhead costs of large-scale operations of colleges and college systems require careful and detailed analysis. Even where scaling down is not practical, greater attention needs to be given to organizational considerations that can increase the personal character of colleges and reduce the psychological distance between learner and teacher (152).

Unfortunately, the Quebec colleges went the other way in the 1980's and merged smaller campuses. But this analysis from Dennison and Gallagher reinforces our argument that local communities can do the necessary work of setting their curricular agendas. Furthermore, these local curriculum groups may help in building morale and forging a sense of identity.

What we can recommend is that this integrative curricular process continue and that the colleges and departments make their orientations and objectives more explicit. The English colleges have begun to recognize the need for a development plan, for a renewal of identity and a sense of purpose in a changing Quebec. The Intercollegial Development Steering Committee is one group encouraging that renewal, and it plans to continue major Pedagogical Days in the various English colleges. It is an energetic new grouping of teachers, professionals, and administrative personnel, deliberately drawing upon the experience of all the colleges.

John W. Gardner's book Excellence sums up for us the potential for rethinking institutional goals:

> We must have diversity, but we must also expect that every instituiton making up that diversity will be striving, in its own way, for excellence. This may require a new way of thinking about excellence in higher education—a conception that would be applicable in terms of the objectives of the institution. . . . .
> For there is a kind of excellence within reach of every institution (84-85).

VIII. D. CEGEP English and general education/ formation fondamentale

1. Overview

In Quebec, the CEGEPs or "Institutes" were to bring together both the pre-university and careers streams in the Core sector of the curriculum: Langue maternelle et littérature and Philosophie. (In the English colleges, the corresponding Core disciplines were 603-English Language and Literature and 345- Humanities.) Humanities in the English colleges was a replacement for Philosophie in the French ones. But it was not a series of courses in the discipline of philosophy, but rather a wide-ranging and unstructured groups of courses crossing over into many different fields.

English was also not a "discipline" structurally in the college system. It was not, for example, defined as a miniaturized university program in English studies. Initially, its objectives were defined broadly by the first Provincial Curriculum Committee, and that broad definition continues to describe the courses.

Nevertheless, despite this wide latitude in objectives, methods, and contents in both Core areas, **it was in the classrooms of the Core teachers that the full challenge of providing general education for all students was to be met.** And that challenge has increased with time in an increasingly pluralistic Quebec. In 1968, a key planning group on curriculum in the CEGEP's defined this new educational stratum this way:

> College education is that level of education that comes immediately after the secondary level and immediately before the university level.
>
> College students normally belong to age group 17/19. For part of this group, college is the final stage before entering university; for the rest of the group, it is a terminal course leading to specialized technical occupations.
>
> This course is also intended for adults who wish to complete their general or vocational training in order to meet labour market requirements (Desbiens 5).

This "balance between general and specialized study" was the primary curricular goal of the GEGEP's: to be achieved largely through the compulsory Core courses . In English courses, by definition, the student was to receive a significant part of his general education. Again, by definition, the required four 603-credits from anywhere in Quebec were to signal to future employers, to Quebec universities, and to universities beyond the borders of Quebec that the student had acquired the equivalent of four semesters of a general education in English language and literature.

Once more, let us stress the innovative approach that Quebec took in attempting to merge the two educational streams. All the disciplines, pre-university and vocational, were to be put together under one roof, that of a CEGEP. The students were to be mixed inside the Core classrooms. Furthermore, it is only in those classrooms that all the students in a college are continually mixed. (Physical Education, of course, mixes them in a non-academic context.) This approach is unique to Quebec's colleges in the Canadian context.

2. The Original Expectations

A philosophy of **an integrative education for the whole person** is embedded in this design. Certain curricular principles and objectives would also seem to be axiomatic in it:

• a shared concept of what formation fondamentale means in the congruent / interlocking domains of the province as a whole, the English college sector, the individual colleges, the Core sector of English and Humanities, and the members of the English departments

- consultation and cooperation among the disciplines
- consultation and cooperation among the key players in the newly-interlocking, secondary and post-secondary levels. For example, one of the main objectives for the organization of college education was "to establish a clear and well-defined organic relationship between secondary education and university education" (Desbiens 7).

Four essentials emerge from this analysis:

1) A shared philosophy of general education and the role of English in it
2) Mechanisms to translate that philosophy into a curriculum
3) English departments and teachers delivering that curriculum in the individual colleges
4) Structures to allow for the articulation of the various interlocking levels of secondary-post-secondary education.

What was originally anticipated almost twenty-five years ago can thus be read or inferred in the record:

1) Institutes (now called colleges or EGEP's) at roughly the same size (2000 students) and certainly none below 1,500 students (The Parent Report, Recommendation # 98)
2) A mix of 70% vocational to 30% pre-university students

3) Curricular objectives and goals established in common

4) A form of regular or annual evaluation, province-wide (Desbiens 7).

These assumptions and plans were being formulated, beginning at least in the early 1960's in the Tremblay Report by Quebec professionals in the many fields of education, the church, and business. While there were consultations world wide, the focus was Quebec. The objective was a complete overhaul of the traditional structures of higher education in the province. It was to create parallel and equivalent structures in French and English higher education in the province.

3. What was not anticipated:

1) "The Sixties," a revolution in thinking that influenced a generation of students (and future teachers) world wide, but especially in North America

2) The abrupt closure of opportunities for University-level employment for many of that generation of scholars and teachers. The Symons Report, Some Questions of Balance, explores the long-term implications of that abrupt change in Canadian educational history.

3) The implications that those two factors would have on hiring:

- the mistrust among newly-hired college teachers of university authority, cited in the early Dawson history by Gallagher and Macfarlane

- the sociological and political principles underlying the original hiring of the first English teachers in the CEGEPS, particularly the focus on heterogeneity of teaching personnel in the first years at Dawson and Vanier Ste. Croix
- the implications that hiring would have on the structure, functioning, and decisions of the Provincial Curriculum Committee in its crucial first years. (These were the formative years when the Coordinator was a paid position, with a significant budget- because those years were to set the pattern for the curriculum and its future evolution, province wide.)

4) The overwhelming success, in terms of numbers, of the CEGEP's. Thousands of students were drawn into the post-secondary level who would never have continued beyond high school. "In Quebec, between 1969-70 and 1972-73, the secondary school enrolment has increased by 26% and enrolment of the CEGEP and college level has seen a growth of 58% . . . " (Canadian University and College, (January 1973) based on statistics of the MEQ).

5) The newly-emerging adult education sector which is changing patterns of enrolments, preparation, and educational needs

6) The economic stagnations and recessions of the last two decades in Quebec and world wide, which encouraged students to

stay longer in school but with concomitant erosion of their future job prospects

7) Demographic changes in Quebec society: the abrupt drop in the birth-rate, especially for French Quebec, political changes like Bill 60, the St. Leonard crisis , Bill 101, the election of the PQ, the 1980 referendum, the English exodus from the province and the increasing influence of the allophone population,

8) The switch in concentration of enrollments from vocational to pre-university (roughly, a reversal of the 70% / 30% expected) . According to Campbell's analysis, the introduction of the CEGEPs, coupled with the very low Quebec university fees, has made Quebec post-secondary education right through graduate school the best education bargain in the world. Whether all of these students are in fact well suited to university is another question.

9) The broad spectrum of departments of English varying enormously in size and in the nature of their institutional settings, but all giving CEGEP English courses for credit.

4. Summary.

No one in 1960 knew what 1990 would bring. Since the early planning days for the CEGEPs, few of the original presuppositions have escaped the challenge of changing events. Still, given the focus of the present study, general education continues to be crucial in the training of an informed citizenry with sufficient basic skills and a capacity for life-long learning. In the current structure of the colleges, its locus in Quebec's English CEGEPs is the classroom of the teachers of English and Humanities. As English teachers in Quebec CEGEP's, we must be aware not only of our history, but of changing realities and student needs.

In today's CEGEP's the vocational students continue to have the fewest options for complementary course choice. Their technical disciplines demand long hours in lectures, in laboratories, stage, practice hours, and study. For those students, especially those in the 17-18 age group, "general education" _means_ English and Humanities, as they have very little time to explore other liberal arts disciplines. Furthermore, once these students leave the CEGEPs, their general education in an institutional setting will be complete.

Analysis of the role of English in _formation fondamentale_ is therefore of central importance because it is in the English classrooms that the most heterogeneous students assemble. In colleges with a high proportion of vocational enrollment, English classes clearly reflect that mix. In other colleges, the proportions diminish, so that in effect the classes become unalloyed university preparation.

Significantly, even the university student can no longer be expected to enrol in a compulsory English course unless he is taking a degree in English because specialization begins in earnest in first-year university studies. So CEGEP English is the last experience the vast majority of the students will ever have with the formal study of English language and literature.

5. What IS General Education?

> **"The notion that the generality of students... can make an informed and intelligent decision about their abiding educational needs before being exposed to the great subject matters and disciplines of the liberal tradition is highly questionable."**
>
> **-Sidney Hook, *The Philosophy of the Curriculum*, 29.**

All jurisdictions agree on one point: the difficulty of defining just wht general education / *formation fondamentale* means. For example, in a major report on the colleges in 1975, *The College: Report on its State and Needs*, the Superior Council stated that *formation fondamentale* "elicited the greatest number of opinions and exchanges. The synthesis of input received mentions 50 recommendations on the orientation of general formation, and 150 opinions on the content of this formation." Most people agreed that general education at the college level should be retained, but few (even then) agreed on its content or methodology: "Those who mentioned specific failings, as for example the universities did in describing the graduates of the 'general' stream, noted especially the absence of rigorous thinking and methods of work, the weakness of the critical sense, poor mastery of language, and the disappearance of an historical sense" (36).

Specifically on English curriculum, the *Cahier* gives little definition of what it means to have a general education in English. This is to be expected since that document gives a broad overview of the various departments operating under it. In her June, 1988 report commissioned by the Conseil des Collèges, Claire Dumont makes the following points about the lack of a coherent approach to general education in English beyond the remedial/languages skills phase in most of the English colleges in the Montreal region:

> "Les cours 'Composition et Littérature' sont parfois considérés comme des cours de transition entre les cours de rattrapage et les cours de littérature; ils peuvent servir de cours d'introduction à la littérature pour les élèves faibles en anglais ou ils peuvent constituer une suite logique pour les élèves qui ont suivi un premier cours de rattrapage. **D'ailleurs, c'est uniquement dans les cas précis de rattrapage que le collège suggère une séquence logique de cours. Pour les cours réguliers de littérature, c'est le libre choix. (10)"** [Italics inserted]

(Dumont notes elsewhere in her report that the FIS English curriculum at Vanier was organized developmentally into first and second year, both in language skill and literature courses. Only after this Introduction to Literature were students allowed free choice of the specialized "second year" group of courses. That program disappeared with the amalgamation of the two Vanier campuses.) Because her research was limited to the Island of Montreal, Mme. Dumont did not include analysis of what was done in three other quite different English departments from public colleges with structured curricula and more explicitly-defined objectives for general education in English: Heritage, Champlain St.Lawrence, and Champlain Lennoxville. In each of these colleges, the progress of all of the students through college-level English studies has been structured through the curriculum design. Decisions have been made by the faculty to offer certain courses in certain sequences in order to attempt a match between the students' entry levels, awareness of formal English studies, and the curricular goals of the department and school. It is interesting to note that all three are small campuses, with a small department cadre, and all are rather distant from Montreal. As we outline below, several other colleges are now beginning to introduce at least one semester o. a basic or introductory-level course.

As the colleges get bigger, with departments of up to 50 teachers (including many part-time instructors) it becomes increasingly difficult to define specific objectives in answer to the question **"What does it mean to have a general education in English?"** Instead, what Cadwallader calls the distribution approach takes over, with ever wider choice for the students and faculty, and the concept of free choice as the ideal. But he questions the capacity of most students to integrate what they learn into some pattern of meaning:

> Nevertheless, while a distribution formula may spread out a student's choices over a formidable array of courses, it is unlikely to provide coherence, integration, and synthesis. In fact, it is difficult not to be embarrassed by the way distribution requirements tend to reflect the distribution of departmental power, rather

> than a common and compelling vision of what should be taught and learned (909).

This "compelling vision of what should be taught and learned" echoes Margaret Earley's comment about the reform of curriculum at Alverno. "We had to ask ourselves in our disciplines, 'What do you teach in your field that the student cannot afford to miss?'"

6. Difficulties of Implementing General Education Goals

In the broad Canadian context, Natalie Sorensen's analysis for the ACCC ranked twenty-one aims generated by a wide variety of Canadian community college personnel in 1984. There was a high degree of consensus on three aims: "desire and ability to learn," "effective reading and writing," and "ability to problem solve," all of which were ranked in the "essential" category and above "career skills." Further, Sorensen found that there was very little variation between aims of college and institute education. But this agreement on abstract principles did not translate into action. The ideal and the reality of curricular priorities diverged when it came to implementing **general education** in the college curricula. The reality was that—Canada wide—time and resource allotment rarely went toward general education goals. Career skills seemed far more achievable than the generic skills which had been so highly ranked in the abstract in Sorensen's survey (Dennison and Gallagher 237, 243).

World-wide, faculty and administrators define the mission of general education in a variety of contexts. In articulating the "General Studies" program for British schools, for example, the Schools Council (1969) discusses the "significance," "connexions," and "transfer of knowledge" of its content. It sums up with the comment of a headmaster, "It's not our job to pump masses of knowledge into a sixth-former's head—to fill him full of facts which he can't organize. We must train him to find out things for himself and learn how to use this information. . . to arouse his critical faculties, help him make the right choices, and to find the right values." (13-17)

In the case of the CEGEPs, the relative youth of the students, combined with the Core program structure common to all disciplines, both general and professional, should prove a more fertile ground for the implementation of such basic goals as lifelong learning, communication skills, and logical thinking.

7. Working Towards a Definition

"We are all engaged in self education. At Alverno, faculty belong to their content area as well as to their competency area: the marriage of ability and discipline bases" (Leona Truchan, Turning Point Conference, November 7, 1990).

Over the past two years one of the initiatives taken by English faculty and others in the CEGEP community is to explore other curricular models. One of the most interesting of these is that of Alverno College, Milwaukee, which organizes its liberal arts or general education curriculum on an abilities base. (Alverno, a private women's college, has approximately 2300 students in the fields of Business and Management, Nursing, Professional Commmunication, Education, Psychology, and Liberal Arts.) Groups of 20-25 CEGEP personnel, including a sizable representation from English, have gone to Alverno for two June sessions, "A New Look at the Disciplines": the Alverno Experiment; Teaching for Abilities (Critical Thinking, Valuing, Interaction, and Communication); Integrating Outcomes in the Humanities and in the Major; the Changing Scene in Higher Education; and Assessment.

One of the outcomes directly relating to our research into renewing CEGEP English curriculum has been a series of discussions and workshops on the abilities CEGEP faculty try to promote in their teaching. None of the Quebec colleges has adapted the Alverno model fully, as it took twenty years of intensive work in a close-knit community of teachers and administrators to develop their program for their context. This program can be briefly summed up as the integration of assessment, active learning processes, and teaching to abilities across the disciplines rather than to course contents. Alverno assess students by grades, for example, but by level, on their demonstrated abilities: communication, problem solving, analysis, value judgements and independent decision making, social interaction, responsibility for the global environment, effective citizenship, and aesthetic response. (Alverno is a private women's liberal arts college, with the core of its senior teachers and administrators drawn from an order of Franciscan nuns.) Since 1989, CEGEP de Lévis has adapted part of the Alverno approach, using problem solving and communications abilities to organize the curriculum. Rather than directly imitating the Alverno model, the primary aim of these training sessions and follow-up activities for the English colleges in Quebec has been to gain a totally fresh perspective on teaching goals at our level in the Quebec context.

Important elements of those experiences have been summarized in Chapter II of this report: **The English Network.** In the context of defining formation fondamentale here, we recall that English faculty and those from a very broad span of disciplines in all the colleges do try to develop very similar abilities in their students. **This awareness of common goals and their clear articulation is essential for the integration of learning that CEGEP should be.**

From the 13 general and career disciplines represented at the Turning Point workshop, at an English CEGEP Intercollegial Day, these were the common abilities teachers were all trying to develop in the students:

1) **logical processes:** discerning, classifying, analysing, organizing,

2) **communication skills :** oral/written: values, ideas, understanding, plans, methods, results. Using appropriate formats/structure/styles.

3) **working both collaboratively and independently**: (tolerance, open-mindedness, sportsmanship,) and initiative and judgement

4) **responsibility:** self-evaluation, accountability, professionalism, and establishing goals

5) **creativity and imagination:** integrating disciplines, taking risks, transferring theory to life experiences, intellectual curiosity, sensitivity and openness in perceptions and reading.

6) **developing humanity:** tolerance, awareness of own values and bias, sensitivity and openness.

This kind of faculty self-education, shared with the students, would help them to learn to learn in the independent milieu that the college represents.

In the Canadian context, Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton, Alberta has addressed the problem of implementing general education goals through wide consultation and consensus on course design, agreeing on general parameters first:

> content . . . closely reflects the problems, the cultural, social, economic, and political environment in which they live. Stress may be placed on the

> understanding and the integrating of the various parts of a complex society. The concept of individual choice, social adjustment, adaptation, interdependence, and global community may be reviewed, In addition, course modules on the aesthetic and spiritual nature of man may be included.

These courses were then grouped into the four categories which became the Core Curriculum at the college:

- **Generic Learning Skills**
- **Life and learning**
- **The Global Community**
- **Culture in the Value System** (Dennison and Gallagher 249).

Natalie Sorensen proposed a pragmatic solution to the problem of integrating the general education goals with the courses actually taught in the colleges. Significantly for our study, she recommended that each college collectively rank its educational goals and then incorporate them in all programs. "The most popular approach to providing general education, from an organizational standpoint, was to provide an integrative seminar of at least a semester's duration through which students would be assisted to assimilate the various elements of their total college experience" (Dennison and Gallagher 249).

For the CEGEPs, with fully 1/3 of the students' courses drawn from the "Core" subjects, a commitment to formation fondamentale was built right into the structure. What is needed, along the lines of individual college initiatives like those of Alverno and Grant MacEwan, is interdisciplinary dialogue and administrative leadership. Neither an English nor a Humanities department in isolation from the curricula overall could possibly establish basic education for all the students. But, with cooperation and planning, they could be its true core.

Chapter IX. Recommendations by chapter

Chapter I: Preamble and Overview

1. Take seriously the barrage of criticisms that CEGEPs have been receiving in the past year. Respond to those criticisms with reflection, a strategic action plan and a sense of renewal. Fundamental questions touching the whole concept of the CEGEPs are posed in *Versl'An 2000* and other publications, particularly in the French press and in studies by the Conseil, as we have reported at length. These are not empty exercises and they will not go away—indeed critical scrutiny is intensifying. As we print our own final report, Jean-Pierre Proulx, influential editor of *Pédagogie collégiale,* reviews Louise Corriveau's book on the future of the CEGEPs. The title of his review? "S'est-on trompé avec les cegeps?" His conclusion is that if the CEGEPs cannot perform better for the 1/3 of the students who are in French, Philosophie, and Social Science—60% of the pre-university student body—the CEGEPs will die within the next few years (*le Devoir* June 29, 1991). For some, he adds, that has already happened. And he concludes by underscoring that a major reform of the CEGEPs has been on the way since *le Livre blanc* (**1978**).

Our specific recommendations below follow the order of the report chapters.

Chapter II: the English Network

We recommend the following measures be pursued to strengthen the network of contacts and communications among English teachers in the colleges:

1. **Update the *Directory of Faculty Teaching English Language and Literature Mother tongue*.** First published in 1984 as a project of the Provincial Committee under Jim Cooke, this directory should be periodically updated and put on diskette for each department of English in the Province. It would be a valuable resource also for our colleagues at other levels

2. **Establish an English curriculum library in each college, to include holdings of both academic material and government policy statements and indexes of other relevant material.** This collection should be tailor-made to the interests of the faculty in that college.

3. **Send all Provincial Committee minutes with all supporting documents regularly to each department.** These should be kept on file, for example in a curriculum library. In any case they should be available for consultation by department members.

4. **The Provincial Committee for English should elect a liaison person for contacts with the French CEGEPs.** Information should be exchanged regularly between the two groups, and reports made back to the departments. Articles on curricular innovations in the French CEGEPs should also feature in the *LAC Bulletin.*

5. Support Literacy across the curriculum, but expand its mandate. Our survey shows that faculty are divided on this publication, but our opinion is that it inspires more appreciation than anger. We think its editors should look at Québec français and enlarge the scope of their publication. In particular we think that the 'Cahier pratique,' where readers find lesson plans for a complete unit of a course, is valuable. Literacy across the curriculum should also consider more extensive coverage of the workshops at Dawson's Centre for Literacy and provide more material on the secondary classroom. As our respondents indicate, there is a demand for information about "what happens" in the classroom.

Another area where coverage can be expanded is Canadian literature and culture. Québec français is not hesitant about publishing reviews of recent classroom texts and literary works. As well, the magazine interviews authors and creative people in other media. It publishes opinion. It is supported by the Canada Council and the Quebec Government. Its political opinions are self-evident from its title. We may not be able to approach the production values of this publication, but there is no reason why our community can not be treated equally in this area.

6. Increase professional development funding for colleges outside the Montreal Urban Community .

Our colleagues at CEGEPs in Hull, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, and the Gaspé do not have the same access to the conferences and workshops which are held in Montreal. Our interviews in the field suggest that isolation from the political center of English CEGEPs, which is unquestionably Montreal, is a problem. Funding should be provided to these institutions so that their members can attend these sessions without prejudicing their ability to attend other academic activities.

Chapters III-V: Faculty, Student Surveys, ELA, and CEGEP

1. Do graduate surveys

Our faculty survey shows that curricular discussion takes place when faculty have something to talk about. Curriculum Committees are 'rubber-stamping' devices when faculty have arrived at a point of stasis, when the main role of the committee is defending what is. But discussion involves real 'soul-searching' when something like a common course is discussed. We find it distressing that there was 'substantial discussion' with the Curriculum Committee in only 21 per cent of our respondents in the faculty survey.

In areas like English, the Humanities, and the Social Sciences, where there is considerable debate about content and methodology, surveys of graduates would stimulate ongoing debate. Was there enough Canadian content? Did we spend enough time on women's issues? Would you like a broader range of courses in this area? I'd like to see more collaborative learning in my English courses. If I never read Milton again, it will be too soon. We should spend more time on basic skills and less on literature? There is no lack of questions to ask because the supply is self renewing. As both our surveys show, when you ask questions you often find answers that surprise you. Vanier College already surveys its graduates on some matters. We recommend that the Curriculum Committees design questions on academic concerns.

Chapter IV. The Language Arts Curriculum

1. **CEGEP English teachers should read the ELA _Secondary School Curriculum_ book, and several copies should be ordered for each department (from MEQ: 16-3236A).** English teachers in the colleges should continue to inform themselves about the new high school curriculum and share ideas about mutual concerns. Workshops are valuable exercises, and the annual conferences of both groups of teachers need some exchanges of perspective.

2. In the case of the smaller colleges, where there may be only one feeder English high school, teachers have expressed concern that any criticisms they have might seem like personal attacks. In such cases, departments should make an effort to contact ELA representatives from the regional schoolboards.

3. **CEGEP English departments should take the initiative in targeting reading comprehension.** This is an ideal area for

cross-disciplinary work, and would help to link faculty in common concerns.

4. English teachers at the CEGEP and high school levels should form an "English Coalition" modelled on that of NCTE and negotiate their Assumptions, Aims, Curriculum and Teaching Practices for each level. In the American model, each "strand" is carefully articulated, and the metaphor is a good one for the ideal of the continuum in Quebec.

Chapter VI. Cognitive Skills and the CEGEP English Classroom

1. Concentrate on the essay of argument, the language of persuasion, inference, and implication. Students at CEGEP age are ready for what Piaget calls "formal operations." They can go beyond personal responses and expressions of feeling. In Moffett's terms, they are able "to theorize about experience." They can recognize a point of view in a text and articulate a point of view in their own writing. And the CEGEP English teacher should develop those higher-level skills in reading and writing.

English teachers should take their cue from the MEQ publication, Student Writing and its Correction and ensure that they give due regard for the higher-level writing demands of the "transactional" essay.

2. Provide a variety of classroom styles to promote independent as well as cooperative learning. The lecture is still the dominant mode in many university classrooms, and skills like note-taking and attention to the structure and meaning of a talk are transferable to many fields. It has a place in CEGEPs too.

Chapter VII. University and the workplace

1. **Departments and the Provincial Committee should research the literature of testing, particularly minimal competency testing, in order to inform themselves about the implications of college-level entrance and exit tests.** The Conseil has made its recommendations on that point, and the French Provincial Committee has begun to set out its positions. The English departments and the Coordinating Committee should work pro-actively on this.

If English universities follow their French colleagues at Université de Montreal and implement admissions tests in language skills, the CEGEP English departments should be active in advance consultation. And that means preparing now. A CEGEP-University Liaison Committee should be initiated, involving Admissions, Student Services, English Departments, and Education Faculty representatives as a start.

2. **If the Minister requires a leaving exam in English, we should take advantage of the opportunity**

In the French sector a leaving exam in language skills is a good possibility in the next three years. If we are asked to do something similar, we should be provided funding for a broadly-based discussion in the English CEGEP community.

Our faculty survey shows that discussion is most intense during curricular change, and this is the sort of change that will provoke discussion. Faculty will want to voice their opinions on the nature of such an exam, how it is marked, and by whom it is marked. They will want to determine how much such an exam will change the curriculum. Funding will be required to bring faculty together to discuss these matters together at length. Workshops on matters like these take time as the experience with curricular change at the secondary level shows. There will be costs, but there will be benefits: a discussion like this will help to establish and reinforce links amongst faculty in the different English CEGEPs.

3. English departments must forge stronger links with the Careers sector. Student numbers and jobs are at stake if we cannot retain our students, and we tend to lose English students in the early years of the Professional-stream programs.

A monitoring system for students at risk is one possibility, and Core teachers could contribute here. **English teachers should also ask to be consulted in the competency tests for written and oral communication skills, which are coming through National accreditation boards for the Careers disciplines.**

4. **Specifically, at the level of the faculty, projects should be developed to share expertise in teaching to generic abilities:** computer-assisted composition, written communication, oral presentations, and problem-solving as examples.

5. **Faculty should also share ideas on integrating their objectives across the disciplines.** Ethics in the workplace and in the health-care system, for example, is a cross-disciplinary theme that might work well in readings and composition. So are environmental topics and issues of social and political rights. Again, the impact of technology is a concern of Core subjects as well as of Technologies themselves.

- The same kind of cross-fertilization that we find in the certificate and majors programs (generally serving the pre-university students) would enrich and integrate the Careers streams. Faculty should explore extending the same kinds of integrative programming to the careers students.
- At the level of the College, funding should be provided to recognize Careers student achievements in cross-disciplinary projects. (These recommendations also follow from our discussion of integration in Chapter V, below.)

6. **Departments should consult with D.S.P.s and sector heads on the significance of the adult learner in the college.** If numbers warrant, teacher-researchers should investigate the latest research in the field and apply it to their contexts teaching English in the CEGEPs.

7. **If new resources are going to come into the colleges for professional development in the teaching of language skills across the disciplines, we recommend that English teachers consult with other faculty and draw up a detailed action plan with the DSPs, Deans, and sector or area heads.** A term like "good communication skills" is extremely vague and needs elaboration and systematic follow-up. Some specifics:

- transactional writing (presenting a position, for example)
- reading comprehension
- oral skills
- group work
- computer-assisted composition.

8. **Investigate the demands of the 1990 job market.** Bell Canada and other major employers regularly give workshops on communications skills. **English teachers should get directly involved in them.** Attract corporate sponsors for academic and creative projects: prizes, publicity, support for awards ceremonies, for example.

Chapter VIII. Renewing English Curriculum

1. DSPs, department chairmen, curriculum chairmen and Learning Centre professionals should organise cross-discipinary projects on integration and shared objectives. As we have demonstrated, curriculum development is largely a department and college function. Very little can be achieved by general application of single strategies. But at the department and college level a great deal more can be done to articulate just what each department or college perceives to be its orientation(s).

2. Establish in-college, interdisciplinary working groups on the key questions of formation fondamentale

How can we establish networks to deal with formation fondamentale? First, every college should have a period of one and one-half hours once a week for student and pedagogical activities. Second, colleges should encourage the organization of, and provide the funding for, interdisciplinary study groups on key questions. These groups would be drawn from within the individual colleges. Perhaps a group might choose to work on the teaching of reading skills in a variety of disciplines or on marking criteria for written work or on collaborative strategies for particular pedagogical problems. The choice of topic would be the group's, but the method would be that employed by Winston Emery at McGill.

The group, having chosen a topic, would read some of the literature, then discuss it, then try some innovations in the classroom. Members would meet to share their findings. If relevent workshops were offered at Dawson or elsewhere, the college would fund the attendance of interested members of the group **apart from the standard professional development budget**. The college would also be required to pay for one or two luncheon meetings during the year. The group would be required to present a workshop at the college's spring pedagogical day, and, if possible, to publish a summary of its findings, either in an in-house journal or Literacy across the curriculum.

The cost of a project like this is less than three thousand dollars (and that is only if there is travel and overnight accommodation required; the costs are more for Cegeps far from Montreal) for a group of seven persons, but the benefits in terms of animation are large. Faculty from different disciplines unite around a common concern, information passes, and links are made.

3. **On the specific recommendations for English from the Conseil, we have already made detailed comments under VIII.B. above.** They are summarized here briefly from **Conclusions and applications:** The Conseil report treats college teachers as professionals able to define the field, set objectives, evaluate their students, their courses, and themselves, and to collaborate with colleagues. Obviously, more clarity and

structure are explicit goals in the document, but power to meet them is still largely in the teachers' hands. From our discussions with departments over the course of this research, we can assert that some of these recommendations will clearly provoke considerable discussion in the months to come, as outlined briefly below. But we cannot overemphasize the importance of local consultation, discussion, and agreement as the sine qua non of any meaningful renewal of first principles. We record here observations based on our meetings with the departments:

> **Conseil Recommendation #1** Departments are wary of any single language-skill assessment that could be trivialized into multiple-choice error counting. As we state in Chapter II of this report, discussion and analysis of the secondary curriculum is still continuing. Harmonizing with university teaching is even more problematical in our polyvalent colleges. (The current Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada inquiry into university teaching, chaired by Stuart Smith of Concordia University, diagnoses major problems at that level in any case. Many of the 250 briefs already submitted to the Commission are critical of the limited attention paid to teaching in the universities: Concordia Thursday Report June 6 1991).

Conseil Recommendation #2 Departmental and college-level examination of objectives will yield the most fruitful results.

Conseil Recommendation #3 Especially at a time of shrinking enrollments, non-credit courses will be a problem to implement unless all the colleges agree to them.

Conseil Recommendations #4-6 Colleges, particularly the DSPs, can do a signal service in implementing these recommendations. English departments do not have the necessary information or powers to assure these resources on their own. To promote professional development, all the departments, the DSPs, and the unions will have to work in harmony.

Conseil Recommendation #7 No single "standardized" test is in use now. The trend seems increasingly toward writing samples, marked holistically. As with the secondary English Language Arts evaluation, such samples would have to be marked using consistent criteria for any reliability. A combination of kinds of summative evaluation (both standardized tests and holistically-marked writing samples) might be possible, but both the test and the evaluation criteria would have to be worked through and agreed upon by the departments. Similarly, the "evaluation par échantillonnage" approach would need negotiation. None of these is, of course, an insuperable problem.

Conseil Recommendation #8 Again, discussion, workshops, and negotiation within the whole community of any college are both healthy and essential to make Literacy Across the Curriculum more than a pious wish.

4. **If any systematic revision of the teaching of English at the college level is to be contemplated, adequate planning and resources for curriculum discussion must be in place, as in the model of the public schools,** which spent at least ten years in research and planning before the new English Language Arts program was fully implemented. Indeed, with their active program of in-service training, consultants on the new program--both curriculum and evaluation--and funding for teachers' professional development, the public school teachers are well briefed on the new program and its implementation.

If DGEC has a master plan to revise English at the college level, a key concern for CEGEP teachers should be that adequate resources are available to make that process workable:

1) Funds for teacher training, conferences (2-3 days), workshops, etc. This means on department-, college- and provincial-levels, and must be equitable for all departments.

2) Language arts, university, employer consultants

3) Resource Centres in the colleges:

-access to conferences

-course work

-guest speakers

-professional library for staff development

-memberships in key ELA and college associations (NATE, NCTE, CCTE etc.)

4) Budgets for publications, travel, networking.

5. Acknowledge academic excellence

As the comments of faculty in the survey and elsewhere in our report make clear, there is much concern about a perceived decline in basic abilities. This proposal is designed to approach the problem from the other direction: to engage students and faculty in a search for excellence and to acknowledge and reward it.

Consider the writing contest run by Bell Canada and the Gazette each year. The costs of this are minimal; the advertising advantages for these firms more than outway those costs. The problem with this contest is that there is only one group of winners just a handful of students recognized as excellent.

If we take this model, with a reasonable prize scale of 1000 dollars for a first prize, 500 dollars for second, 300 dollars for third, and 200 dollars for fourth and establish a series of annual in-college awards for the best papers in English, in the Humanities, in Social Science, in Science, in the Technologies, and in the Professions, we would be sending a clear message that excellence counts in that particular college.

A series of five awards like this would require five, three-teacher panels of judges. The wise DSP would see to it that each panel contained a member, or perhaps two members, from other disciplines. The DSP would also make sure that these panels brought together representatives who embody what appear to be the two main interests of our respondents: academic work in the discipline and pedagogical concerns. The hidden agenda is to bring people together and discuss divergent approaches. This sort of work will make these 15 faculty aware of what colleagues in other disciplines are doing and establish links where they did not exist before.

Awards of this kind might serve as a memorial for distinguished faculty. Such a practice serves to create a feeling that the college recognizes the work of great teachers, and this can have nothing but positive results. Awards like this would also help students impress employers and universities. If students think there is a chance their work will be recognized, they will work. A regulation that a student can not win first prize in more than one category will serve to spread recognition as far as possible.

Colleges should consider publishing the names of winners in local newspapers. There is a cost to this, but they should consider it a legitimate advertising expense. The

Director-General and the DSP might take the winners and their families as well as the judges out to a presentation dinner.

The cost for a project like this at a large college would not exceed 20 thousand dollars, and less at a smaller institution with fewer students. But costs should be put in perspective: Andre Campagna, the DSP at Bois-de-Boulogne, estimated the total annual cost for remediation in French at $282,000 . At a CEGEP of five thousand students, this project would raise the per student cost of education by four dollars. That is less than 1/10th of one per cent.

6. **Each college should promote and publicize the excellence of its faculty and the achievements of its students.** CEGEPs get more bad publicity than good, and they must work harder to build morale and attract students. Specifically for English, the teacher as writer, researcher, and master-teacher need promotion and recognition. This publicity is good PR in giving parents, students, community leaders a positive image of our work and commitment.

7. **CEGEP English departments should establish working groups with Humanities colleagues to plan integratively.** Especially in the large colleges, the two Core areas work separately rather than together. Another important area for these two Core subjects to discuss is the coordination of their teaching goals: complementary reinforcement rather than

duplication and isolation. Core is the logical centre of each college's curriculum. The DSPs and curriculum coordinators or sector heads should also become more proactive in co-ordinating college-wide efforts. They must show leadership in defining *formation fondamentale* at each college—and in making it work.

Annotated Bibliography

This is the third and most comprehensive annotated bibliography from this year's work. One was distributed and discussed with the Provincial Committee at its February meeting, the second was printed for all the teachers in the February issue of *Context.*

Agassi, Joseph. "The Freeze-Dried Brain," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences.* 18 (1988) 251-157.
Analytical review of Bercuson, et al. below, teasing out some political implications for Canadian policy makers.

Alverno College, *A New Look at the Disciplines: Teaching Abilities Across the Disciplines.* Volumes I and II. Milwaukee: Alverno, 1990.
Background and workshop materials on the Alverno approach, with emphasis on the frameworks for each of the eight abilities in the program.

Angers, Pierre, and Colette Baribeau. 'Les ambiguités de l'évaluation.' *Québec français* 65(March 1987): 79-82.
The why and how of evaluation of language learning by our French colleagues. The emphasis is on formative evaluation.

Anisef, Paul et al. *Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education in Canada: A review of the Literature.* Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State, 1985.

Avis au Ministre de l'éducation sur l'élaboration des programmes professionnels. Conseil des collèges, October 1984.

Bagnall, Janet. "Critics say Quebec's 25 Years of Reform add up to zero," *The Gazette.* November 1 1986 A1, 4.

Bailey, William J. *Managing Self-Renewal in Secondary Education.* Englewood Cliffs: Educational Technology Publications, 1975.

Bateman, Dianne. "A Longitudinal Study of the Cognitive and Affective Development of CEGEP Students." PAREA, 1988.
Yes, students develop in their short time at college, but our science students start where some others finish.

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Beauregard, Claude. "Quebec's CEGEP colleges and the question of meaningful innovation," *Canadian University and College.* May, June, 1972. 44-47.

Bercuson, David J. et al. *Great Brain Robbery: Canada's Universities on the Road to Ruin*. Toronto: Maclelland and Stewart, 1984.
Three Canadian historians collaborate in a critique of university standards: open admissions, lack of rigour in their curricula, tenure, and grade inflation. They state that 50% of the first-year students were failing basic literacy tests, and that few "had ever had to prepare an essay (64)".

Bergonzi, Bernard. *Exploding English: Criticism, Theory, and Culture.* Oxford: 1990.
English Studies—and Departments—are combat-zones in the 1990's bristling with schisms, manned by Old Dons and Young Turks, and split between othodoxies and heterodoxies. The *casus belli*: lack of consensus on what it means to be an educated person—and how to get that way. Bergonzi takes the opposite view to Graff's, in recommending that the split be institutionalized, with Cultural Studies separated from English.

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Bloom, Alan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1987.

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Blott, Anne, and Arnold Keller. "The Development of CEGEP English Curriculum: Renewing Cegep English Curriculum, Vol. I." Quebec: DGEC (PAREA), 1991.

Braddock, Richard, et al. *Research in Written Composition.* Champaign: NCTE, 1963.

Britton, James, et al. *The Development of Writing Abilities 11-18.* London, Macmillan, 1975. An influential text in terms of the ELA curriculum.

Brown, Wilfred J. *Education Finance in Canada.* Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation, 1969.

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Burgess, Donald A. *Education and Social Change: A Quebec Case Study.* Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. Harvard University, 1978.

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Chance, Paul. *Thinking in the Classroom*. New York: Columbia Teachers College, 1986.

Conseil des collèges. *l'Harmonisation du secondaire et du collégial: l'état et les besoins de l'enseignement collégial. Rapport 1988-1989.* Québec: 1989. A study of the difficulties students have making the transition from high school to college. Recommendations for cooperation between the two levels: #3 to define general education at the high schools and *formation fondamentale* at CEGEP, #4 to ensure continuity infoundational skills like English/ French, #9 to establish first-year structures at the colleges to promote students' integration, #14 to try a modular approach for career programs, each to include Core courses along with specialized and complementary courses.

__________. La réussite, les échecs, et les abandons au collégial. Rapport 1987-1988. Quebec: 1988. More than 35% of CEGEP students never get their DEC (or any other certificate.) Lack of preparation (language, math, thinking skills and organization), lack of integration of studies, isolation of disciplines from each other, size of some colleges, and rigidity of program structures are some reasons advanced.

__________. Vers l'an 2000: Les priorités de développement de l'enseignement collégial. Document de consultation. Québec: 1990. A comprehensive series of 59 questions on future design of the CEGEPs. A sample of special interest to teachers of Core English: Should the departments continue to have so much autonomy? Should the Core demands of 4 courses in English continue in all programs? Should colleges have more latitude to develop their own programs? The results will appear in the Spring of 1992.

__________. "Réflexions sur la formation fondamentale," Québec: Conseil des colleges, 1988.

__________. La Qualité du français au collégial: éléments pour un plan d'action. Québec, 1989. Mastery of French is seen as the single most important element offormation fondamenale. Recommendations include the institution of remedial language courses with adequate budgets. The report also recommends more consistent focus on the orientation of French courses to Language, Literature, and Society. Lefebvre and Sanchez-Cortes below comment on the report.

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Demange, Martine, et al. "Le Palmarès des Collèges: 51 collèges québecois par ordre d'excellence: professeurs, encadrement, élèves, et équipement," L'Actualité Dossier Spécial. Vol. 16 No. 2 (février 1991) 21-27. A rating of 51 French-language colleges, both public and private, conducted by a research team for this influential Maclean-Hunter newsmagazine. l'Actualité's rating of all the French colleges uses the criteria of "teacher quality; "library and other resources for students: dynamic, disciplined, and rigorous academic administration; student profiles (full/part time, graduation success within standard program plan). Only the pre-university programs are compared, as they are common to all the colleges. Thus, colleges which mix general and professional streams are compared to those which are exclusively pre-university and pre-select their students. Of the 10 "top" colleges, 6 are private.

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Desrochers-Brazeau, Aline. "Témoinage d' un directeur d' ecole." Québec français 65(March 1987):76-77. A principal provides a generally positive assessment of the new French Program.

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Dias, Patrick X., et al. Writing for Others/ Writing for Ourselves. Montreal: McGill University Press, 1990.

Dixon, John. Growth through English. Oxford: 1967.

An overview of the Dartmouth Conference, which influenced the development of the Language Arts approach to the teaching of English in Quebec. It focussed largely on younger learners, and its student-centred methodology evolved primarily in the teaching of poetry and drama. In subsequent editions, Dixon noted that a broadly-based English curriculum would have to focus also on language as persuasion and argument: systematic analysis, logic and clarity. Again, levels of language and the language used in media and mass communication need systematic study. Finally, Dixon notes that at Dartmouth, while some consensus was achieved, opposing views on knowledge *versus* skills remained far apart (xii-xiv).

Dufresne, Jacques. "Le Ministre de l'Education est invité à s'immiscer dans ses propres affaires: l'enseignement," Montréal: *La Presse* 18 février 1989 A2.
Criticism of the state of language teaching in the French CEGEPs, with a focus on the lack of reliable testing, the lack of logical sequence, and the poor French writing of CEGEP graduates. Dufresne welcomes the Conseil's recommendations and the return of provincial testing, at first in representative sample groups ("par échantillonnage") as in CEGEP Sainte-Foy.

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Commissioned by the Conseil des collèges and based on Dumont's interviews (primarily with the DSPs and Learning Centre personnel) in 4 of the major colleges and English-language universities in the Montreal region, the report describes writing problems of the students and discusses remediation.

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The special section on writing in this journal also includes articles by Patricia Durfee, "Writing-to-learn in Technical Writing," and Betty Pytlik, "Teaching

Teachers of Writing: Workshops on Writing as a Collaborative Process."

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CONTEXT

Volume one, Number three *May, 1991*

Renewing CEGEP English Curriculum

French Language Admission Tests

As of September, 1992, the French Language Exam at Universite de Montreal will be required of all entering students. Until now, the test has been used as a diagnostic during the students' university career; but it is to be made a requirement for admission. This is a major development in Quebec education, and it will certainly impact on French CEGEP curricula and methods.

The test, designed by Laval University and similar to tests at University of Sherbrooke, covers 5 language abilities:

SYNTAXE: (word order, sentence construction, relationship of words)
29 questions/ 29 marks
MORPHOLOGIE: (word formation, agreement, case endings) 8 questions/ 8 marks
LEXIQUE: (word choice, meanings, appropriate and use of expressions)
12 questions/ 12 marks
ORTHOGRAPHIE: (spelling)
10 questions/20 marks
(-1 per error)
VOCABULAIRE: 11 questions/ 11 marks.

Out of the 80 points possible on this test, the average at U of M for the past two years has been 37. Of more than 5000 students who wrote last September, 41% failed the test, ie., scored lower than 34. The results vary by faculty, with failure rates ranging from a low of 13% to a high of 71%.

In addition, all the U of M faculties now have a common policy for remedial French courses. The pass mark for the French test has remained at 34/80 for the past two years. Students with scores of 23 or lower must take the following three courses: FRA1957G (Grammaire 1) in the Faculty of Continuing Education and FRA1952R & FRA1953R (CAFE 1 & 2) with monitors in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Students with scores between 24 and 33 are to take FRA1952R and FRA1953R with monitors in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Note also that these courses are obligatory, supplementary to the student's program, free for full-time students and taken for credit.

IMPACT ON THE COLLEGES:

The introduction of this admission test will put pressure on the colleges. Several French Colleges are already using a common "Correction Grid" designed by Marc Desbiens at CEGEP Rosemont. This grid, currently being tested in their CAFs (Centres d'aide en français), looks as if it will dovetail well into the university test. Listed below are its main headings, on which student work is measured at the initial and final steps of remediation. (Students are often referred by their regular French teacher, of course.)

Note, however, that the CAFs also are analysing other aspects of the student's work, including Composition (organization and development, style, etc.); Reading (improving speed and comprehension); Learning Style; and Work Habits. In these CAFs, too, trained student moniteurs and animateurs are working one-on-one with the students.

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Grille de Correction:

PHRASE: Structure
  Agreement of Verb Tenses
  Punctuation
  Pronoun agreement

GRAMMAIRE
  Agreement: in genre, number, pronoun/antecedent, past participle.
  Verb conjugation, forms.

ORTHOGRAPHIE
  Correct spelling
  Capitalization
  Homonyms
  Abbreviations
  Accents

VOCABULAIRE
  Correct expressions
  Anglicisms
  Repetition or redundancy

Press Coverage of Language Teaching

On every national educational agenda, communication skills and cultural literacy are at the top, as countries try to provide fundamental, universal education to their citizens. We are living through another phase of Quebec's education revolution at a time when public scrutiny is very intense. Commentary below is drawn from Le Devoir, the Gazette, and the Manchester Guardian to provide some breadth of perspective on these issues.

LANGUAGE COVERAGE IN LE DEVOIR

Concern about the quality of French spoken and written in the schools of Quebec is a hot topic in the French press, and intellectual leaders in the province are looking closely not only at the objectives of the colleges, but at their results.

Fur was flying after l'Actualité rated the French colleges in February, and both professors and administrators cried foul. (Some of the key evaluation criteria relating to language were teacher training, evaluation, library facilities, computer access, the quality of French, and implementation of a French literacy policy college wide.)

Despite these howls of protest, as Gérard Ethier asked rhetorically in le Devoir, how is it that with all their professional resources, their long summer break, and their access to statistics, the colleges have not instituted and published their own systematic evaluation? Indeed, he continued, "Comment se fait-il que ce soit une équipe de journalistes qui soient obligés de faire ce travail d'évaluation avec des moyens très réduits et dans des conditions très difficiles?" (March 1 1991 B8) Mr. Ethier is a professor at l'école nationale d'administration publique and was a consultant on the l'Actualité inquiry.

Protests notwithstanding, the climate is changing. Jean-Pierre Proulx reported four days later that the Fédération des cégeps had just submitted an analysis to the Conseil des collèges for the Vers l'an 2000 inquiry, including this statement: "Un système comme le réseau collégial est bien évalué, donc fait une bonne reddition de ses comptes, quand il est soumis à plusieurs indicateurs de qualité"(A1).

This notion of accountability to the clientele, the society, and the Province drives the system towards genuine reform, Proulx writes. And this reform focusses on "formation fondamentale" and on the "integrative principle" or program approach in the colleges. Understanding texts and expressing ideas orally and in writing are keystones of one's basic education and capacity to synthesize information, so this renewed focus on the mastery of language in the colleges is logical.

Even the high schools in the French public sector are subject to performance appraisal in the French press, and the Devoir analyzed Ministry statistics to show success rates in Secondary V exams in Oral French and Written French, and in Secondary IV and V Maths. These statistics were then published for each of 23 French public high schools in the CECM, with an analysis by Caroline Montpetit. Important to note is her observation that among the highest-rated schools, extremely good scores were recorded in the production and comprehension of oral French. But more than half the students failed in written French (February 26 1991 A4).

ENGLISH PRESS COVERAGE

By comparison, the Gazette gives relatively little attention to education or to the teaching of English at any level. Although it reported that Quebec parents were "flooding l'Actualité with messages of "Bravo!" for its coverage of the French colleges, the Gazette has not undertaken any parallel study in our sector. It merely noted some of the caveats the French colleges and their unions had stated about the report (January 24, 1991 A3).

The Manchester Guardian this month is running a series of articles on the new National Curriculum in Britain, which will be fully in place in 1997. HRH Prince Charles fired one salvo when he spoke at Stratford-upon-Avon on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, deploring a "general flight from our great literary heritage." On skills, he found it incredible that one child in seven leaves primary school functionally illiterate in Britain, and that 40% leave school with no qualifications. Only a third of the 16-18 year olds in Britain were still in school, compared to 66% in France, 77% in Holland, and 79% in the U.S., he said. On methods, he said that the "child-centred, open-ended learning methods generated enthusiasm and interest at the expense of accuracy in the basic skills."

The Guardian Weekly carried a supporting article the same day, "**Inspectors attack English teaching,**" briefly summarizing the independent school inspectors' report, which called for "more coherent and explicit approaches to reading" and stated that up to a third of the primary students sitting the new national tests performed poorly in the "basics of English" (April 28 3).

Education Minister Kenneth Clarke brought up the heavy artillery May 5, when he asked, "Why do we not have a reliable state education system?" He agreed with many critics of the current system, and stated that after twenty years of experimenting with "process rather than content" consensus had finally emerged: "We do need to establish a body of fact and skills that need to be taught to all our children." Perhaps in recognition of the European union, beginning in 1992 the British national curriculum will ensure that all children study a modern language.

Clarke's article insisted that many parents, some teachers, and many "educationalists" need to have more confidence in the capacities of students, need to challenge them more and set higher expectations. We should keep an eye on developments in Britain, as so much of the original thinking behind the Language Arts Curriculum originated there and was imported and applied to our Quebec students. The new national curriculum in Britain, including testing by levels as an essential component, includes English in setting higher expectations for the students in state-funded schools:

> *"The curriculum will be fully completed and in place by 1997. It is already providing extensive culturally based programmes of study and attainment targets for teachers to use as a framework. The history and geography programmes of study to be introduced this September are pretty formidable. Any child well taught in either of these subjects will emerge from school extremely knowledgeable at the age of 16. I have insisted that both should be firmly based on a body of factual knowledge."*

To conclude this brief summary, we observe that U of M, Laval, and Sherbrooke all communicate their university French test results to the DSP's at the various feeder colleges, and we know from our interviews this year that the French colleges are concerned about their students' scores. Collège Bois-de-Boulogne, arguably the "strongest" of the public CEGEPs in the French network (and able to pre-select the cream of the CEGEP applicants) was disturbed to find that 25% of their students failed the U of M test.

We have read reports from the United States that President Bush wants to set national minimal competency standards in the core subjects, including math and English, for high school graduates. In fact, English competency tests are also being discussed at the national level for Canadian public schools, but so far none of Quebec's English universities has developed a comprehensive English admission test. Colleagues in the Careers sectors will be collaborating on defining competencies for their disciplines, to meet the national accreditation board requirements. These competencies will include written and oral communication skills.

The latest news we have on the Quebec college scene is that we will see exit tests for French language competencies within a year, as they are high on the agenda of our new Education Minister Mme Robillard. (AB)

What Works in the Classroom?

George Hillocks, Jr.'s "Synthesis of Research on Teaching Writing" from the May, 1987 issue of Educational Leadership is an interesting summary of what works in the writing classroom. His article also presents recent research into the composing process which we will include in our final report.

Hillocks, who is a Professor in both the Department of English and the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, reviewed several hundred studies looking for those with a superior design and adequate controls. He settled on 60 studies involving 72 experimental treatments. These studies dealt with the emphases in classroom instruction most commonly found: grammar (the definition of parts of speech, the active parsing of sentences), models, sentence combining, scales (the development and use of criteria for judging and revising compositions), inquiry (the use of simulation games to generate 'real life' classroom activity and subsequent composition), and free writing. His analysis expresses the change in quality of student writing in fractions of standard deviation.

Grammar is dismissed as an effective focus: "the study of grammar does not contribute to the growth in the quality of student writing (75)." The best that can be said is that one four-year, 'carefully designed' study in New Zealand showed no measurable difference in three groups of students, one focusing on traditional grammar, another on transformational grammar, and a third on no grammar. The five studies, taken together, show a classroom focus on traditional grammar damages student writing.

Free writing is the least effective of the techniques currently in vogue. In free writing students write about whatever interests them in the matter at hand. There are no inhibitions. That production is combined with peer group activity, both in terms of the generation of ideas (brainstorming and clustering) and feedback. The use of models and other criteria is discouraged. Finally at the end some teacher feedback is forthcoming. Hillocks agrees that teachers who use this technique have a better understanding of composition but concludes that 'free writing [alone] and the attendant process orientation are inadequate strategies (80).'

Models, the imitation of examples of the standard types of prose, resulted in a 'small' gain of 0.217 standard deviations. This is 'surprising,' according to Hillocks, because much everyday writing makes use of 'identifiable patterns or forms.' Perhaps the reason is that too much instruction takes as its focus the 'declarative knowledge' of models, the identification and naming its parts and features. More emphasis on performance might help.

Sentence combining showed marked improvement in the quality of student writing. At 0.35 standard deviations it is more than twice as effective as free writing. Exercises of this type present students with groups of two or more sentences and require them to make a single sentence according to some structure stipulated in the material. Since the mid 70s the instructions for these assignments have excluded 'grammatical terminology.' In general, syntactic complexity increases with age, but theorists believe such work gives students a control over syntax that they can apply to their writing.

Scales are sets of criteria for judging and revising compositions. Here students are guided by the teacher in the evaluation of introductory compositions. Where works are not top-rated (usually on a continuum of 0-3) students receive prompts which help them revise the work. Students then apply their knowledge to the works of their colleagues and of themselves. Theorists believe the 0.36 improvement shows the acquisition of 'discourse knowledge': that knowledge that reflects the how of composition. Inquiry is the classroom technique which shows the greatest gain by far at 0.57. Here students use 'sets of data in a structured fashion to help (them) learn strategies for using the data in their writing' (78-80). Essentially we are talking about carefully structured simulation games which present the students with the possibility of seeing the data (in a valid way) from more than one perspective. Typically, students are assigned a perspective. Consider prison reform: you might be made a guard or you might be a prisoner. You are required to defend that point of view against other perceptions which are almost equally valid. The argumentative oral and written tasks are at the highest level of discourse, but equally as important, according to theorists, is that students learn how to transform raw data into an opinion. (BC)

Continuity/Change: Spring Conference on CEGEP and High School English

Again this year, Dawson hosted the CEGEP English Spring Conference, April 19. It was pleasant to meet colleagues from around the province and to take part in some lively exchanges on English studies.

COLLEGE HISTORY

In the opening panel, James Whitelaw gave another of his witty overviews of the past, this time focussing on Core English. He was an important planner for the CEGEPs 20 years ago, when English at the college level looked a lot different from its 1990 version. Some specifics:

1. courses were to be linked to student goals, eg. with technical language
2. optional course were to be differentiated for perspective employment
3. All teachers in all disciplines "were to possess impeccable language skills" and there was to be "no hiring without oral and written language tests"
4. Both languages were to have equal weight in the colleges: 3 hours/wk for the mother language and 3 for English or French as a second language. Philosophy was to have 4 hours/wk.

COMPOSITION SKILLS

The university, high school, and business consultants expected the CEGEPs to do the real labour of ensuring competence in writing skills. Class size was limited to 20, and teachers were expected to assign 10 short essays per term. Fully 1/3 of classroom time was to be spent on teaching composition, and 50% of the assignments were not to be on literature.

Whitelaw recalled that the English courses were to provide understanding of the nature of language. [This objective now figures as one of the key elements of the Language Arts Curriculum.]

Initially, in the curricular plans
through 1967, two required English courses were set: Approaches to Literature and Western Literary Backgrounds. But already by 1968, the picture had changed as French as a second language was dropped as a requirement and the Core mandatory courses increased to 4: Introduction to Language, Composition, Western Literary Tradition, and Approaches to Literature. This was the year when the Core categories came in, each to include one mandatory course and two others.

When Dawson opened its doors a year later, the courses had changed totally and reflected the 60s more than any traditional approaches.

HIGH SCHOOLS TODAY

If the early CEGEPs reflected the 60's in the backwash of a movement from the States, the high schools of today are shaped by two quite different sets of forces.

When the Language Arts curriculum was still germinating, the child-centred curriculum for English was the subject of great theoretical interest. New theories of reader response to literature and writing as process were changing the way young English teachers perceived the classroom and their place in it.

These approaches have guided the curriculum through its planning phase, and now with full implementation across the province, the English classroom ideally is a learning centre, with very active students responding to text and editing each other's early drafts.

The second element in the system is the role of the Ministry, which gradually has yielded some control to the teachers. This active engagement of the teachers in curriculum design is of real benefit to them as professionals, Bev Steele commented in the panel discussion. Bev, who is in charge of English evaluation for MEQ, has been actively promoting the program and involving the teachers themselves in production committees on evaluation. The Ministry exam still weighs in at 50% of Sec. V grade, but the teachers are playing a greater role in the design and refinement of that exam. If the CEGEPs get to the stage of having to set common final exams for their students, we could learn a lot from the active participation of the public school teachers.

Bev briefly sketched the profile of a student the new curriculum is designed to produce:

- approaching tasks as process
- used to notetaking, prewriting, journals
- comfortable in group work
- needing time to respond
- needing contexts for assignments: audience and purpose.

"Dramatic changes have occurred," Bev concluded; "We are harnessing the best energies we have."

THE COLLEGE STUDENT OF THE 1990s

Helen Wehden of the Dawson Learning Centre and Fran Davis, English teacher at Vanier, described the changes they have seen over the years in the two schools. It was almost as if the two oldest colleges in the English system had recently exchanged personas, judging by some of their comments. Vanier has discovered the multicultural and working-class student, while Dawson has discovered Yuppies. Both schools—more importantly—are also trying to accommodate a youth culture which no longer values reading yet puts a very high premium on good grades.

The speakers agreed that reading skills are seriously eroded. Vanier no longer tests reading, but by 1989 the scores "had dropped significantly" compared to those of 1974. (Vanier then was skimming off the top 56% of the students and now takes 78% of its applicants.)

The picture **is indeed** dismal if we try to infer how **the current** Dawson and Vanier students read. Helen had statistics for past performance on the Nelson Denny and for 1990 scores. And they show that today fully 45% of the Dawson students read **at or below the grade 9 level.** Only 49% read at or above the grade 11 level. At the same time, the other colleges are now taking more and more of the weaker students in the system. So we can deduce that the proportion among them who read significantly below their age and grade level is higher even than Dawson's.

Helen commented that these weak readers will have difficulty with most college-level textbooks. "These reading scores frighten me," she said, for the students will have difficulty with the higher-level abilities needed for modern society: "distinguishing major from minor ideas; connecting concepts, making inferences, judgements, and implications; and interconnecting areas of discussion."

We need to push and challenge our students intellectually if we are to produce an inquiring citizenry, she concluded. There is a great deal of work to be done, but the students **can be taught** these skills.

To conclude on a more cheerful note for us greying pedagogues, one of the commentators from the floor noted that you get your cultural literacy partly just by growing older. I was hoping there would be some compensation! (AB)

WORKSHOP A

We have all been to workshops, probably too many in fact. But this one was actually an exchange: very civil but very real. I'll start near the end, when the workshop leaders Nancy Brown of the Kahnawake Survival School, Joanne Trussler of Massey-Vanier High School in Cowansville, and Bob Alexander of Centennial Academy, Montreal, turned the tables and asked the questions: "Is there a system for evaluation that is common to the colleges?" and "Is there a common ground of agreement on the objectives of college teaching?" Wine and cheese could wait, the group stayed an extra half hour to pursue the discussion.

Several college teachers answered frankly. There is little agreement, and there is even a reluctance to ask the hard questions. For some, silence is golden, let sleeping dogs lie, and live and let live. For others, implementing curriculum change was clearly challenging the status quo and raising some hackles in the process.

As these high school-college meetings sometimes degenerate into "What are you going to do to our students?" or "How are you going to prepare your students for our requirements?" it was refreshing that all of us this time were a little self-critical. As one of the college participants said, "We're always pointing fingers." Questions of how best to teach correct writing, (the "g" word, even) and the need for more structured, objective writing went round the table. (If only we could distinguish the teaching of writing skills from the vocabulary of Latin grammar, we might get ahead. Or perhaps a new, user-friendly language about writing would help.) In any case, the tone was polite and professional, and Marjorie firm but fair.

The public schools are wrestling with a new curriculum, centralized evaluation (with a human face), demands for "accountability", shrinking resources, and a culture which rates reading and writing marginally above driving a hearse. The colleges share many of their problems. Today's healthy little exchange, then, ended by generating a series of ideas in a tour de table, where the colleges and high schools would like to bring all our students:

- taking language and literature seriously—what we're all concerned with
- being more objective and knowing the difference between opinions and facts
- accepting the teacher as "the irascible reader. Kids want to communicate. You can get bristly, but do it in a caring way. They want to enter the adult world, so we can hold the standards high."
- developing more precision in diction
- improving their skills through tougher challenges
- continuing to improve in their speaking skills, having more confidence to express their opinions—"one of the positive points of the new Language Arts program."
- being open creatively but able to write in third person—for expository writing
- adapting to higher-level skills
- reading a lot of various kinds of texts, writing a lot of different kinds of work
- enjoying what they are doing with us.

The workshop had begun with an interesting account of the Language Arts Curriculum at the Kahnawake Survival School, where it is well established although the school is not legally required to teach it. (An independent school under the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, it does not ask its Sec. V students to write the MEQ exam.)

What works there in Nancy's view is that the teachers are committed to the program, and students are involved and encouraged to do more reading, much of it is self-directed in the early grades. Native writers are also featured in the syllabus. Class size is 15, and teachers emphasize portfolios of writing for formative evaluation. Peer editing is also important: at least two other students look at writing samples. "Students are generally much stronger in expressing feelings than in structuring formal writing," Nancy said, echoing many studies on their cognitive and affective maturity at this stage.

On the whole, teachers and students have had very positive experience at the school, and the percentage of students going on to CEGEP has doubled since the program started.

Joanne also distributed reading lists and a very useful break-down of readings by group number: LA 512, LA 522, and LA 532. She pointed out that more of the general students (from LA 512) are now going on to college. Classes in high school are heterogeneous, and "we take them where they are and grade them on their progress." Since MEQ gives all the students the same code on their transcripts, "the dilemma for the colleges is to distinguish among their real levels in interpreting the grades. When the two streams, general and academic, are merged like this, you're going to get students who have not mastered mechanics—there's no question."

She also emphasized the reading problems of our students. For many, reading and writing are not part of their lives. "Out of my class of 30 in LA 522, I'd say only 5-6 read for pleasure." School board budgets for new books are also inadequate, she noted.

Bob Alexander also commented on the dangers of turning teenage students completely off writing by the "cleated boots" approach to marking. "We cannot force them to care about correctness, and we cannot fail 90% of our students." He cited Nancy Atwell's In the Middle, published by Irwin, as a good introduction to the goals and methods of an open response to literature.

The 3 workshop leaders were generous in sharing their ideas and documents like course descriptions, reading lists, and assignments. We all benefited from their hard work and that of the organizers. (AB)

Curriculum Questionnaire: '90

The full report on province-wide response to last year's curriculum questionnaire was presented to the Provincial Committee in October and discussed again with an analytical report in February. We are sending some additional copies to the department chairmen now, as this is the most detailed version of the report. It breaks figures down by college and prints every written comment from teachers (pages 6-27). We are updating the short analysis now for the last Context newsletter of this academic year. That way it is distributed to each teacher for information.

PART I: MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS:

1. Who has decision-making responsibility for curriculum?

Among the large colleges (Champlain, Dawson, John Abbott, Marianopolis, and Vanier) 42%—by far the largest response—stated that the decisions regarding curriculum should be in the hands of the departments. A further 10% include the individual instructor, so that the majority of these respondents place this responsibility at the local level: a reflection of the twenty-year history of local autonomy.

However, among the smaller colleges identified as "others", approximately 60% were looking to the Provincial Committee for those decisions.

2. Are there any authors who should be read by all students?

The largest response (43%) stated that there were no authors who should be read by all students, followed by 38% who specified Shakespeare. Only five female authors were mentioned, and only one of those was Canadian.

What is also striking that only 6% listed any Canadian authors or even mentioned Canadian works as a general class. Three times as many (18%) specified an author from other languages and literatures. This seems anomalous when compared with these responses.

(7a) Only 20% of respondents said Canadian literature was not important in their teaching, while 1/3 of respondents said it was very important, 21% said fairly and 18% slightly important.

(7b) Only 2% said that Canadian literature was not important in their department's curriculum; 28% said it was very important and 46% that it was fairly important.

It might be worth noting in this regard that the English Language Arts curriculum specifies no particular content or national literature throughout the five years of secondary instruction. Originally, the Parent Commission Report stated that since the high schools were covering Canadian literature, the colleges could put less emphasis on that area. But now, in 1991, very few Canadian authors are taught in the English high schools of Quebec and only 10% of the students are now taking NAL. (The French Language Arts curriculum, however, puts a very heavy emphasis on Canadian writers writing in French.)

3. Do students read enough, too little or too much of the tradition of literature written in English?

Over 50% of respondents stated that students are taught too little of the tradition of literature written in English. One of the global objectives for English Language and Literature set out in the Cahier focusses directly on this point: "[Les quatre cours communs] visent aussi à leur faire approfondir la connaissance de leur héritage culturel, tel qu'il est révélé par la littérature (1.63)". Again, in the objectives of the General Literature categories, the Cahier states that "The CORE literature curriculum is designed to deepen the students' understanding of their cultural heritage and the literary tradition to which they are heir (11)".

4a and 4b. Time spent on teaching writing skills in literature classes .

Evidently, in literature classes, the mechanical skills of writing take up little class time: approximately 1/2 the time given to the more advanced essay planning skills.

5. Evaluation of Writing Skills

One half of the respondents gave a lot of weight to grammatical correctness in essays (More than 25% of the evaluation). One fifth gave little weight to correctness (0-15%); a further one fifth was between those extremes.

6. Media studies:

Understanding of the types of discourse (both print and media) is one of the six fundamental objectives of the Language Arts curriculum, and it figures as one of the five general categories in the CEGEP English Cahier, as Literature and Media. But over the broad range of the respondents, it appeared not to be very important, since 27% gave it no importance and a further 31% up to 1/4.

8. Choice of Readings: Is any reading as good as any other for your purposes?

As indicated in the full report, 83% of respondents cited excellence as the sine qua non of the readings for their courses. (The only exceptions stated were for writing courses, where other levels of readings were sometimes brought in.)

9. Sequence

There is a clear split in the responses to the question about sequencing of courses. In colleges where the courses are sequenced, support runs very high: for example, Heritage 100% and Vanier 80%. In colleges where there never has been sequencing, support for a non sequenced curriculum is fairly high: John Abbott 77% and Dawson 60%. In the case of Marianopolis, which was planning to introduce a required sequence for the first time in 1990, support was at 70% at the time the questionnaire was administered, and it is now over 90%.

10. Two thirds of respondents felt the curriculum served second-language students adequately or well, and one third were not satisfied. Champlain St.Lawrence and Heritage expressed the highest levels of dissatisfaction.

PART II: WRITTEN COMMENTS

The questionnaire asked teachers to comment on required authors and to explain changes in courses and demands on students (6-15). In addition, teachers listed and explained their own curricular concerns. These have been grouped under the following headings and are recorded in full in the report (16-27).

1) Defining English Core
2) Our role in the education continuum
3) Our specific aims and objectives
4) Organization, content and methods of the curriculum
5) Teaching conditions
6) The CEGEP student. (AB)

1990 Student Survey

In November, 1990 we surveyed 203 of our incoming students, roughly 10 per cent of the freshman class. We distributed instructions, questionnaires, and opscan sheets to our colleagues, who in turn administered the survey to their students in Introduction to Literature and Effective Reading and Writing. The instructions and the questions we asked, as well as our raw statistical data, are included at the end of this article. The opscan sheets were processed using programs developed by Data Processing at Vanier College. Students in Language Use 1 and 2 were not included in this survey.

Our goals were to gain some indication of who our students are, how they fit into our curriculum, what sorts of experiences they had in the Language Arts Programs at secondary school, and what strengths and weaknesses they bring to the study of English at the Cegep level. Our survey is an initial effort in this area. We do not view these results as definitive, but we do believe our findings will give some focus to researchers who come after us. Some areas that might benefit from future study are noted in the conclusions at the end of each section.

1. The first-year students at Vanier in 1990

There are more women (54.6 per cent) than men (43.8 per cent)in our general population, but when we look at these students in terms of the language they speak at home, interesting changes occur. In terms of the anglophone students, the balance is almost equal with 50.5 per cent men and 49.4 per cent women. Amongst allophones, those who speak a language other than French or English at home, we find that 38 per cent of this part of our sample are men and 62 per cent women. Similar figures appear for our francophones (41.6 per cent men, 58.3 per cent women) but here the low numbers in this portion of the sample make us hesitate to draw a conclusion. But the question remains, where are the allophone males? They appear not to be at big city, public cegeps, like Vanier College.

When we look at the responses to Question 3 (Are you preparing to go to university?) and Question 4 (Which language do you speak at home?) together, it appears that many more allophones and francophones are attracted to our careers programs than to our general, university-bound patterns of study. While overall 48.2 per cent of our students are anglophone, 10.8 per cent francophone, and 40.3 per cent allophone, relatively fewer anglophones (14.7 per cent of the total anglophone population) choose a careers path than allophones (21.4 per cent of that group).

a. How our students fit into the first year curriculum at Vanier College

Of our sample 76.3 per cent took Introduction to Literature, our standard first year course, while 23.6 per cent of them were screened into Effective Reading and Writing on the basis of a written composition which all students are required to complete as part of their admission to the college. These numbers change when we look at them from the perspective of the language spoken at home and from the perspective of whether or not students are in a careers program. Only 17.8 per cent of our anglophone students took Effective Reading and Writing, but that number grew to 25 per cent for our francophones and 30.9 per cent for our allophones. The numbers are equally striking for careers students: fully 36.5 per cent of them take this remedial course, while only 20.3 per cent of their university bound colleagues find themselves in the same classes.

b. Adequate resources for formation fondamentale

Should English programs in cegeps with a concentrated allophone population and an increased number of students in careers programs be given additional resources to deal with the problems in formation fondamentale these students present? It is a question that will have to be addressed.

As well, we note that 26.6 per cent of the men find themselves in Effective Reading and Writing, while only 21.6 per cent of the women are in the same classes.

2. Vanier students and language courses at the secondary level

Secondary school language courses receive a mixed review from our students as a whole: 39.9 per cent of our students were neutral on Question 14 (The Language Arts Program in secondary school challenged me. I was stimulated.) Some 31.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 25.5 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. 1.8 per cent of our sample failed to answer this question.

There are, however, interesting differences between our sub groups on this topic. Of the men, 35.5 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only 18.8 per cent of the women felt this way. As well, the responses of our university bound students were far more positive than those headed for careers: respectively, 33.2 per cent and 24.2 per cent agreed or strongly agreed. Our francophone students were most positive with 58.3 per cent of this small sample saying they were challenged by their courses.

a. Collaboration

Collaboration is supposedly one of the cornerstones of the new curriculum, and we were interested in finding out just how much time was spent in collaboration at the secondary level. In Question 16 we asked our students: "How much of your class time did you spend in a group or with a partner discussing readings and preparing responses?" We offered them five responses ranging from 10 per cent to 50+ per cent in intervals of 10. When all the responses were taken together they divided almost evenly between the categories. The highest was 40 per cent collaboration with 22.6 per cent of the respondents.

Again there are interesting differences amongst the sub groups. When we look at the 40 and 50+ per cent categories, 31 per cent of the men remembered that they collaborated at these higher levels, while 49 per cent of the women placed themselves there.

b. Reading

Question 17 presented students with the statement that "the reading in secondary English dealt with subjects that interested me." The numbers in our five categories from strongly agree to strongly disagree were 5.4, 34.4, 38.4 (neutral), 13.6, 6.4, indicating a generally positive response. There were, however, differences in the sub groups. Of the men, 28.8 per cent expressed dissatisfaction, while only 12.4 per cent of the women felt the same way. Fully 53.6 per cent of our careers bound students felt neutral about their readings.

Do students read enough these days? In Question 21 we asked a loaded question: "We read too much in our secondary English courses: the teachers should have given us less reading." The responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree were 2.9, 8.8, 19.7, 49.7, and 16.7 per cent, indicating that our incoming students felt they should have read more. There were differences between men and women and university and careers students. Fully 70 per cent of the men disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, while 63.3 per cent of the women felt the same way. 72.8 per cent of the university bound students felt they should have read more, while only 40.4 per cent of the careers students felt the same.

The new secondary curriculum has a strong social bias, and we wondered how students respond to that. In Question 20 students were asked to comment on "Reading literature doesn't make me a better person." From strongly agree to strongly disagree the responses were 7.8, 10.3, 30.5, 33.9, 16.2 per cent, indicating that most students believe literature is linked with personal development. But in terms of those who agreed or strongly agreed with this negative statement, we find 25.5 per cent of the men and 12.4 per cent of the women.

We also asked students to rank reading as one of five possible activities in Question 26. Of the men, 19.9 per cent ranked it first or second, while 33.8 per cent of the women placed it in the same categories. Fully 34.4 per cent of the men ranked reading last as opposed to 12.5 per cent of the women.

c. The student and the teacher in the secondary classroom

When we asked Question 13 - "My teacher helped me understand the materials in the Resource Book and assemble materials for the written finals" - we thought we would find out how active the teacher is in the new English Language Arts classroom. One axiom of the new curriculum is that teachers are not to deprive their students of their learning. But something entirely different appears to come through here: some students have closer relationships with their teacher than others. The overall results show that most teachers helped students get ready for the final, written exam, but the women think they were helped more than the men: 43.2 per cent of the men agreed or strongly agreed with this statement as compared to 52.5 per cent of the women. At the other end of the spectrum the numbers were 19.9 and 11.5 per cent, respectively.

The responses to Questions 25 and 19 seem to support this hypothesis. Question 25 (Last year our teacher talked with the class before deciding what we would read) drew responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree of 6.8, 23.1, 16.7, 31.0, and 22.1, but when we look at the two negative categories together and group the responses according to sex we find 59.9 per cent of the men and 47.2 per cent of the women. In Question 19 (When I wrote I got better feedback from my classmates than from my teacher) 29.9 per cent of the men disagreed or strongly disagreed while 38.3 per cent of the women felt the same.

When we take this together with our earlier discussion of collaboration in the secondary classroom, it seems that women have better relationships with their colleagues and with their teacher. As well, it appears that they respond to the secondary curriculum more positively than their male colleagues. In the light of all this, it is not surprising that fewer women find themselves in Effective Reading and Writing.

3. Students rate their strengths and weaknesses

In Questions 7, 8, and 9 we asked students to rank themselves in terms of the six criteria used on last year's secondary leaving exam. In Question 7 we listed preparation, ideas, quality of language, mechanical precision, and revision and proofreading across the page and asked students which of the five gave them the most difficulty. In Question 8 we listed the same items and asked which gave the least difficulty.

a. Ideas

Paradoxically ideas headed the list in both questions. In general 28 per cent felt ideas gave them the most difficulty, but 41.8 per cent felt it gave them the least. There appear to be two sorts of students here, those who think they have ideas and those who do not. Men, surprisingly, think they have an easier time here than women. 30.3 per cent of the women say they have trouble, as opposed to 25.5 per cent of the men. Fully 46.6 per cent of the men found ideas the least difficult as opposed to 38.3 per cent of the women.

b. Mechanical precision

Our students identify mechanical precision as a problem area: 27 per cent say it is the most difficult and again there is a difference between men and women: 33.3 per cent of the men find this hard as compared to 22.3 per cent of the women. One surprising note is that only 19.5 per cent of our careers students find this the most difficult area, but they most often find themselves in our remedial classes. Perhaps this is an area one finds a problem if one has been sensitized to the problem. Interestingly, mechanical precision is the criterion in Question 8 that fewest students said gave them the least difficulty.

c. Preparation

Preparation is the process of taking notes, freewriting, underlining, and drafting that preceded the two final written exams last year. In general, 22.6 per cent of our sample found this most difficult. In the criteria for next year's English Language Arts leaving exam, Preparation will be combined with Revision and Proofreading, the area receiving the lowest ranking on Question 7(most difficulty) and the second highest ranking on Question 8 (least difficulty). Women find preparation more difficult than men (perhaps because they collaborate more intensely), while men find revision and proofreading harder than women. The results of Question 15 (**I think that when you write well you do not have to do much revision**) can be considered here. The general results from strongly agree to strongly disagree are much what one would expect from a curriculum that stresses revision: 3.4,18.2, 15.7 (neutral), 49.2, 12.3, but there are interesting differences between men and women: only 8.9 per cent of the women are neutral on this topic, while 24.4 per cent of the men place themselves there. This difference pushes out into the positive and negative ends of the scale. 18.8 per cent of the men agree or strongly agree as opposed to 24 per cent of the women. At the other end 56.6 per cent of the men disagree or strongly disagree as opposed 65 per cent of the women.

d. Quality of language

Our students think that Quality of language is not a major problem. It is ranked the fourth most difficult and the third least difficult, but in neither case is it mentioned by more than 17.8 per cent of the students. That 17.8 rating refers to the percentage of our allophone population who find this most difficult.

e. Writing assignments in general

Question 18 (The writing assignments were easy) attracted responses that approximate a normal curve: 6.8, 25.6, 38.4, 22.6, and 3.4, but here again there are intersting differences between men and women. 36.6 per cent of the men disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement as opposed 17.8 per cent of the women. 32.2 per cent of the men were neutral on this topic, as opposed to 42.2 per cent of the women.

4. Possibilities for future research

a. Who are our students

There appear to be several factors at work in the way our students respond to language courses. A larger sample, with more definition to the questions and more sophisticated data processing, might get at them. Clearly there are important differences in learning styles between men and women and university and careers students in our population. We pride ourselves in having a student centered curriculum, so we should expect that these questions will be addressed.

b. How do our students see us

We are well aware of the controversy teacher evaluation raises in the Cegep context, but we feel that a survey of graduating students at a college as to how they responded to the particular curriculum offered there would be valuable. Broad curriculum surveys of this kind are easy for most colleges and within the mandate of the department and the DSP as spelled out in the collective agreement.

Many of the questions that should be asked are obvious: Do students feel there was a sufficient emphasis on writing, reading, and research skills in their courses? Do students want more access to courses with Canadian content? Does the college offer enough courses with a multicultural emphasis? Did the courses you took interest you? Such surveys, by reflecting student experience of a curriculum as a whole, would help individual departments and colleges think about their curricula and evolve. (BC)

Context writers: Anne Blott and Brian Campbell

Edited, design, layout: Anne Blott.

Vanier College
Excellence in Education
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> ***Socrates saith plainlie, that "No man goeth about a more godlie purpose, than he that is mindfull of the good bryinging up both of hys owne and other men's children."***
>
> ***—Ascham's Scholemaster, Preface.***

Vanier College

Provincial Committee for English

February 10, 1991

Dear Colleagues:

Attached you will find some written comments focussed on CEGEP English curriculum, a follow up on past and current research:

- The package begins with a section which offers a brief analysis of some key elements in the responses to last year's Curriculum Survey.
- As one way of pursuing the concerns expressed in the written commentary for question #12, I have also attached a brief annotated bibliography including some of the current documents unique to our situation in the Quebec education continuum. (I included also a copy of the French Provincial Coordinator's article "Core Education: The Teaching of French, the Language Competence sought at the College Level,"(***Factuel*, November 1989 12-13)**. AB)
- The final section is a short summary of what I take to be some key features in the consultation document Vers l'an 2000, as they bear on our planning and teaching English curricula in the colleges. Some of the questions that are posed here, and their underlying implications, are clearly important indicators of the future evolution of the colleges here.

This package is, of course, only a supplement to the discussions at your meeting February 15. Both I and my colleague Brian Campbell will appreciate the opportunity to exchange ideas with you on a wide variety of issues.

Yours truly,

Anne Blott

[illegible]

I: **Curriculum Questionnaire** (A) Multiple-choice questions

1. **Decision-making responsibility for curriculum.**

Among the large colleges (Champlain, Dawson, John Abbott, Marianopolis, and Vanier) 42%, by far the largest response, stated that the decisions regarding curriculum should be in the hands of the departments. A further 10% include the individual instructor, so that the majority of respondents place this responsibility at the local level: a reflection of the twenty-year history of local autonomy.

However, with the smaller colleges identified as "others", approximately 60% were looking to the Provincial Committee for those decisions.

2. **Authors.**

The largest response (43%) stated that there were no authors who should be read by all students, followed by 38% who specified Shakespeare. Only five female authors were mentioned, and only one of those was Canadian.

It is striking that only 6% listed any **Canadian authors** or even mentioned Canadian works as a general class. 3 times as many (18%) specified an author from other languages and literatures. This seems anomalous when compared with these responses: (7a) Only 20% of respondents said Canadian literature was not important in their teaching, while 1/3 of respondents said it was very important, 21% said fairly and 18% slightly important.

(7b) Only 2% said that Canadian literature was not important in their department's curriculum; 28% said it was very important and 46% that it was fairly important.

It might be worth noting in this regard that the English Language Arts curriculum specifies no particular content or national literature throughout the five years of secondary instruction. The French Language Arts curriculum, however, puts a very heavy emphasis on Canadian writers writing in French.

3. **English Literary Tradition** .

Over 50% of respondents stated that students are taught too little of the tradition of literature written in English. One of the global objectives for English Language and Literature set out in the Cahier focusses directly on this point: "[Les quatre cours communs] visent aussi à leur faire approfondir la connaissance de leur héritage culturel, tel qu'il est révélé par la littérature (I.63)". Again, in the objectives of the General Literature categories, the Cahier states that "The CORE literature curriculum is designed to deepen the students' understanding of their cultural heritage and the literary tradition to which they are heir (11)".

4a and 4b. Teaching of Writing Skills .

Clearly, in literature classes, the mechanical skills of writing take up little class time: approximately 1/2 the time given to the more advanced essay planning skills.

5. Evaluation of Writing Skills

One half of the respondents gave a lot of weight to grammatical correctness in essays (More than 25% of the evaluation). One fifth gave little weight to correctness (0-15%) and a further one fifth was between those extremes.

6. **Media studies:**

Understanding of the types of discourse (both print and media) is one of the six fundamental objectives of the Language Arts curriculum, and it figures as one of the five general categories in the CEGEP English Cahier, as Literature and Media. But over the broad range of the respondents, it appeared not to be very important, since 27% gave it no importance and a further 31% up to 1/4.

8. **Choice of Readings**

As indicated in the commentary on the questionnaire, 83% of respondents cited excellence as the *sine qua non* of the readings for their courses. (The only exceptions stated were for writing courses, where other levels of readings were sometimes brought in.)

9. **Sequence**

There is a clear split in the responses to the question about sequencing of courses. In colleges where the courses are sequenced, support for this principle runs very high: for example, Heritage 100% and Vanier 80%. In colleges where there never has been sequencing, support for a non sequenced curriculum is fairly high: John Abbott 77% and Dawson 60%. In the case of Marianopolis, which was planning to introduce a required sequence for the first time, support was at 70% at the time the questionnaire was administered.

10. Two thirds of respondents felt the curriculum served the second-language students adequately or well, and one third were not satisfied. Champlain Ste.Foy and Heritage expressed the highest levels of dissatisfaction.

Part II: Written Comments

Several questions asked for written responses, and these are all quoted in the full report. Briefly, on the last of these, question #12 **Which of your curricular concerns does this questionnaire leave out?** the questionnaire asked teachers for a list and elaboration of their own curricular concerns. These have been grouped in the report under the following headings:

1) Defining English Core
2) Our role in the education continuum
3) Our specific aims and objectives
4) Organization, content and methods of the curriculum
5) Teaching conditions
6) The CEGEP student.

This questionnaire forms part of a study of CEGEP English Curriculum and your experiences in high school are important to us. How what we do at college fits or doesn't fit your preparation at the secondary level is most important. Answer the following questions on the opscan sheet, making clear marks with the pencil we provide. Be sure you put your responses in the right places. The little boxes on the questionnaire are there to help you orient yourself to the opscan sheet. Please help save the trees: do not mark the questionnaire.

Give us some basic facts

1. Which High School did you attend last year?

St F-X	Chomedey	West Hill	Etc	Other
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Which sex are you?

Male	Female			
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Are you preparing to go on to university or are you in a careers program?

university	careers			
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Which language do you speak at home?

English	French	Other		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. I wrote the Secondary V Leaving Examination

in June	in August	I did not write it		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6 This semester I am taking

Introduction to Literature	Effective Reading and Writing			
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tell us about last year's exam

7 Here we list five of the criteria for the two writing assignments that made up last year's exam Mark the one that give you the **most difficulty**

preparation	ideas	quality of language	mechanical precision	revision proofreading
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8 Here we list five of the criteria for the two writing assignments that made up last year's exam. Mark the one that give you the **least difficulty**

preparation	ideas	quality of language	mechanical precision	revision proofreading
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. The other criterion on last year's exam was **form**. Was finding a form for your work difficult

very difficult	difficult	not hard	easy	very easy
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10 For my creative writing I produced

a poem	a play	a story	a personal letter	other
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11 For my transactional writing I produced an

essay	article	editorial	other	
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12 I was well prepared for last year's exams because we had done many assignments like it during the year

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13 My teacher helped me understand the materials in the Resource Book and assemble materials for the written final

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tell us about secondary English and about yourself

14 The Language Arts Program in secondary school challenged me. I was stimulated.

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15 I think that when you really write well you do not have to do much revision

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. How much of your class time did you spend in a group or with a partner discussing readings and preparing responses

10 %	20 %	30%	40%	50+%
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. The reading in secondary English dealt with subjects that interested me.

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. The writing assignments were easy

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. When I wrote I got better feedback from my classmates than from my teacher

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Reading literature doesn't make me a better person

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. We read too much in our secondary English courses. the teachers should have given us less reading

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. The real reason for learning to write well is mastering the language so that you can persuade people to do what you want.

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

23. I'm good. I don't need any more English courses.

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

24. When I read the newspaper, the section I focus in one is

news	living	editorials	entertainment	sports news
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

25. Last year our teacher talked with the class before deciding what we would read.

strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

26. If I had some free time and had a choice of watching tv or a film, reading, participating in sports, talking with my friends, or listening to music, reading would be my _______ choice.

first	second	third	fourth	fifth
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

27. Last year 93 per cent of those writing the Leaving Examinations in English passed. From my knowledge of my class I think this pass rate is

too high	high	about right	low	too low
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

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strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

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(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)